



780.92 G466d

66-10071

Dark

W. S. Gilbert, his life and  
letters

780.92 G466d

66-10071

Dark

W. S. Gilbert, his life and  
letters

~~MAIN~~

kansas city



public library

kansas city, missouri

Books will be issued only  
on presentation of library card.

Please report lost cards and  
change of residence promptly.

Card holders are responsible for  
all books, records, films, pictures  
or other library materials  
checked out on their cards.



0 0001 4513639 6

0 0001 4513639 6

Henry do S

25 Oct 1957

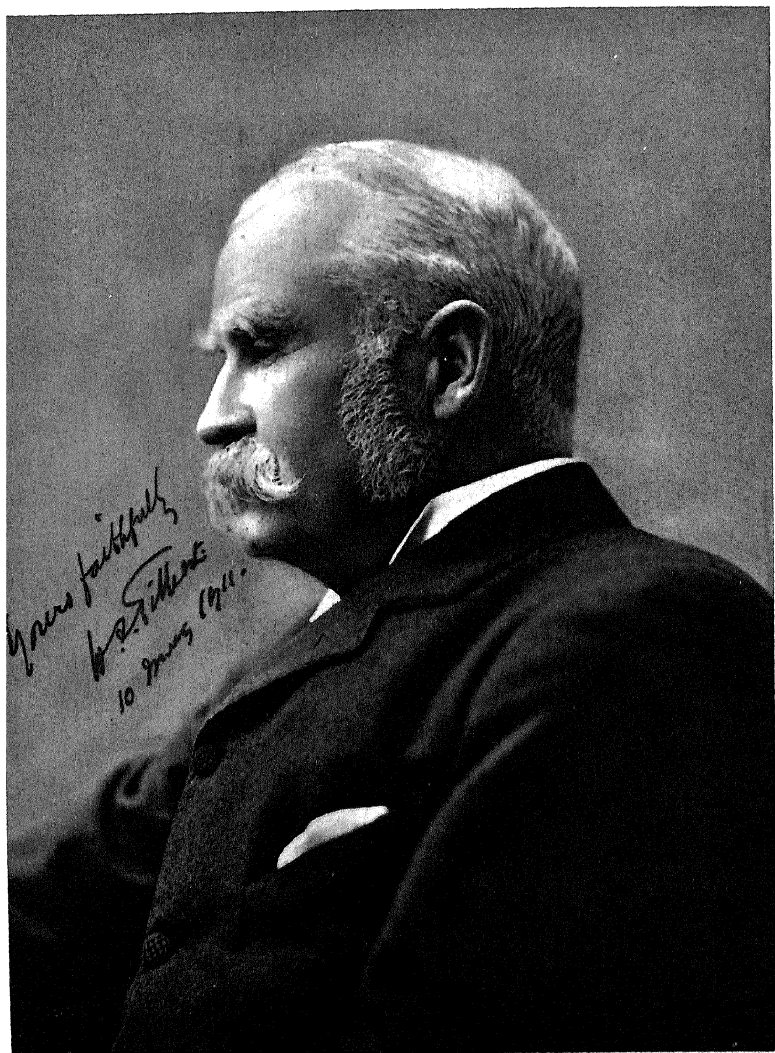
DATE DUE

[illegible]



W. S. GILBERT





SIR WILLIAM SCHWENK GILBERT

(This photograph was signed nineteen days before the dramatist's death.)

# W. S. GILBERT

## HIS LIFE AND LETTERS

BY  
SIDNEY DARK  
AND  
ROWLAND GREY

WITH EIGHT FULL-PAGE PLATES AND  
SOME ILLUSTRATIONS IN THE TEXT

LONDON: METHUEN & CO. LTD.  
NEW YORK  
GEORGE H. DORAN COMPANY

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

## FOREWORD

MY friend, the late Henry Rowland-Brown, an intimate friend of Sir W. S. Gilbert in the later years of his life, had intended to write the biography of the author of the *Bab Ballads* and the Savoy libretti. The war and the long serious illness that finally occasioned his death prevented him from carrying out his intention. He left behind him certain memoranda, and before his death, he had related to his sister, Miss Rowland Grey, a vast amount of Gilbertiana, without which this book could hardly have been written. Miss Rowland Grey's knowledge and enthusiasm have made it possible to attempt the task.

We have had most kindly and gracious help from Lady Gilbert, and to her and to Miss Nancy McIntosh we are under a great debt of obligation, as we are to Mr. Rupert Carte and to the numerous ladies and gentlemen, mentioned in the course of the biography, who have lent us letters and have given us their recollections of Sir William Gilbert at various times of his life. We are also indebted to the Editors of the *Cornhill Magazine* and the *Strand Magazine* for permission to use certain letters that have been printed in their columns.

S. D.

KANSAS CITY (MO.) PUBLIC LIBRARY

6610071





# CONTENTS

CHAP.	PAGE
I GILBERT'S BEGINNING . . . . .	I
II GILBERT AND "FUN" . . . . .	9
III GILBERT'S PROSE . . . . .	36
IV THE FIRST PLAYS . . . . .	41
V GILBERT AND SULLIVAN . . . . .	62
VI LATER PLAYS . . . . .	137
VII GILBERT IN THE THEATRE . . . . .	152
VIII GILBERT'S FRIENDSHIPS . . . . .	166
IX THE CROWNING YEARS . . . . .	193
X GILBERT AS A LAWYER . . . . .	200
XI GILBERT AT HOME . . . . .	207
XII GILBERT THE MAN . . . . .	214
XIII THE LAST DAY AND AFTERWARDS . . . . .	220
XIV GILBERT THE ARTIST . . . . .	228
APPENDIX . . . . .	241
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	261
THE GILBERT AND SULLIVAN OPERAS . . . . .	265
INDEX . . . . .	267



# LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

## PLATES

	FACING PAGE
Sir William Schwenk Gilbert . . . . . <i>Frontispiece</i> (From a photograph by ELLIS & WALLERY)	
Gilbert as an Officer in the Gordon Highlanders . . . . . (From a photograph by WINDOW & GROVE)	42
Gilbert in the Early Sullivan Days . . . . . (From a photograph by WINDOW & GROVE)	62
Gilbert's Original Design for the Prince of Monte Carlo's Dress for "The Grand Duke" . . . . .	128
Another of the Dramatist's Costume Drawings for "The Grand Duke" . . . . .	134
Gilbert as Harlequin . . . . . (From a photograph by ELLIOTT & FRY)	194
Gilbert at Grim's Dyke . . . . .	208
Sir George Frampton's Medallion on the Victoria Embankment (From a photograph by HUMPHREY JOEL)	228

## IN THE TEXT

	PAGES
Gilbert's Illustrations to <i>Fun</i> and the <i>Bab Ballads</i> . . . . .	. II-23
A Gilbert Letter . . . . .	182
Sketches in Court . . . . .	205
Gilbert's Illustrations to <i>Fun</i> and the <i>Bab Ballads</i> . . . . .	241-260



# W. S. GILBERT

## HIS LIFE AND LETTERS

### CHAPTER I

#### GILBERT'S BEGINNING

**W**ILLIAM SCHWENK GILBERT was born at 17, Southampton Street, Strand, in the house of his mother's doctor, on November 18, 1836. His second name, Schwenk, was the surname of his godmother. He was the only son and one of the four children of William Gilbert, a naval surgeon, who retired from his profession at the age of twenty-five on inheriting a moderate fortune.

The Gilberts claimed descent from Sir Humphrey Gilbert, the Elizabethan navigator who landed at Newfoundland in 1583 and established the first English colony in North America. There are certain striking resemblances between the navigator and the Savoy poet. Their physical proportions were much the same. Both possessed hot tempers and could "shoot out their arrows with bitter words." Both were capable of almost quixotic chivalry; both made mistakes leading to cruel misjudgment by exasperated contemporaries. It is remarkable, too, that William Schwenk Gilbert had the sea passion. Both Lord Charles Beresford and Lord Jellicoe assured him there was not a rope wrong aboard His Majesty's Ship *Pinafore*. The *Bab Ballads* are salt with sea-brine. Another and a tragic resemblance—Sir Humphrey Gilbert's ship was wrecked off the Azores and he was drowned. "The general, sitting abaft with a

book in his hand, cried out to us in the *Hind*: 'We are as near to Heaven by sea as by land.' " The poet dramatist died in the water too, gallantly attempting, old man as he was, to rescue his friends in distress. Whether the pretty conceit of Elizabethan descent is genuine, or, as cavillers insist, mere fancy, there is certainly an odd similarity between the two careers.

W. S. Gilbert's father, William Gilbert the elder, was born in 1804, and though the books he wrote fill nearly two columns of the British Museum *Index*, he published nothing until he was fifty-nine. When his father began to write, his son was then twenty-seven, and already known as a promising young author. It is suggested that it was the son's success that spurred his father to literary activity. "I think the little success which has attended my humble efforts certainly influenced my father," Gilbert told Miss Edith Brown. "You see, my father never had an exaggerated idea of my abilities; he thought that if I could write, anybody could, and forthwith he began to do so." William Gilbert the elder suffered from an unfortunate stilted literary style. He was a man of many prejudices, having a particular aversion to the Roman Church and to the Catholic party in the Church of England.

The younger Gilbert had a deep and sincere regard for religion, and for good men and women of all faiths.

In one of his books, *Facta Non Verba*, William Gilbert the elder insists that Protestant ladies are far more philanthropic than Catholic nuns, for, while the religious habit has secured recognition, the inconspicuous Protestant has never been valued at her true worth. In this book there is an account of an Elizabeth Gilbert, a rich blind woman, who, moved by compassion for her poorer sisters in misfortune, dedicated her life to their service in a manner distinctly foreshadowing the methods of the late Sir Arthur Pearson.

William Gilbert wrote three-volume novels, which had quite a good circulation in their day, and which are full of

fulminations against intemperance and injustice to rate-payers. His *Memoirs of a Cynic* contains one passage that the author's brilliant son might have written :

"From my earliest childhood the ridiculous has thrust itself into every action of my life. I have been haunted through my whole existence by the absurd."

The *Memoirs of a Cynic* is rather a tiresome book, full of prejudices and antagonism against things in general. It contains a notably brusque and very Gilbertian attack on the fashionable ladies' doctor "who never cures." Two of William Gilbert's books, *The Magic Mirror* and *King George's Middy*, have special interest from the fact that they were illustrated by his son. The illustrations have the characteristics of the drawings made afterwards for the *Bab Ballads*, and, with the exception of Rudyard Kipling and his father, we can think of no other such collaboration between father and son. Of the two, *King George's Middy* is the more interesting.

William Gilbert, senior, had the true Gilbertian temper. The late Mr. William Faux, one of W. H. Smith's managers, used to relate that when he was a youth he was once left in charge of one of his firm's country branches. Gilbert stalked into the shop and asked for all the copies of *Clara Levesque*, one of his novels, and, to the horror of the boy, proceeded to tear them to pieces in a violent rage. Mr. Faux afterwards learned that the author had discovered that his final proofs had not been properly corrected.

After their marriage, the elder Gilbert frequently called on his son and daughter-in-law on Sunday, when the maids were out. He was asked not to knock at the door, but to ring the bell, as the knocker could not be heard. But he persisted in knocking, and refused to ring. He would wait for some time, knocking and knocking, and finally go away, angry and offended, to be seen no more for weeks.

While he was a small child, W. S. Gilbert travelled with his parents in Germany and Italy, and when he was two he



#### 4 W. S. GILBERT: HIS LIFE AND LETTERS

was stolen by brigands at Naples and ransomed for twenty-five pounds. Two pleasant Italians stopped Gilbert's nurse and said that the English gentleman had sent them for the baby, and she handed him over. This incident was obviously in Gilbert's mind when he wrote *The Pirates of Penzance*. It will be remembered that Ruth, the simple-minded nursemaid, was told to apprentice Frederick to a pilot, and in mistake she apprenticed him to a pirate:

"Mistaking my instructions that within my brain did gyrate,  
I took and bound this promising boy apprenticed to a pirate.  
A sad mistake it was to make and doom him to a vile lot,  
I bound him to a pirate—you—instead of to a pilot."

Gilbert's pet-name as a child was Bab, and this, of course, is the origin of the *Bab Ballads*. He is said to have been a child of considerable beauty, and Sir David Wilkie asked to paint his portrait. At seven he was sent to school at Boulogne, and at thirteen he was sent to the Great Ealing school, a remarkable scholastic establishment, which numbered among its pupils at one time or another Charles Knight, Lord Lawrence and his no less famous brother Sir Henry Lawrence, Sir Robert Sale, Bishop Selwyn, George Alexander Macfarren, Thackeray, John Henry Newman, Thomas Huxley and his brothers, Captain Marryat, Lord Truro, Bishop Westmacott, and Hicks Pasha. Huxley's father and Macfarren's father were both for a while members of the teaching staff. It has been impossible to discover any details of Gilbert's childhood. He was not one of those men who talk much about their early days, and, as his sole surviving sister has told us, it was never a family habit to keep any correspondence. He used sometimes to refer to his child affection for those highly coloured cardboard theatrical characters which Stevenson also adored, and which are still manufactured by Mr. Pollock, of Hackney. While he was at Ealing he wrote plays for his schoolfellows to act, but, alas! the manuscripts have either been lost or destroyed. At school, Gilbert was regarded as a clever but rather lazy boy, and he once told

Rowland-Brown: "I was not a popular boy, I believe." But he hated being left behind, and by the time he was sixteen he was head boy of the school, winning various prizes for verse translation of the classics.

After leaving school he went to King's College, where Canon Ainger and Walter Besant were among his fellow-students, and his first published literary work were verses that appeared in the college magazine. In a fragment of autobiography published in the *Theatre* Gilbert says:

"I was educated privately at Great Ealing and at King's College, intending to finish up at Oxford. But in 1855, when I was nineteen years old, the Crimean War was at its height, and commissions in the Royal Artillery were thrown open to competitive examination. So I gave up all idea of Oxford, took my B.A. degree at the University of London, and read for the examination for direct commissions, which was to be held at Christmas, 1856. The limit of age was twenty, and as at the date of examination I should have been six weeks over that age, I applied for and obtained from Lord Pamure, the then Secretary of State for War, a dispensation for this excess, and worked away with a will. But the war came to a rather abrupt and unexpected end, and no more officers being required, the examination was indefinitely postponed. Among the blessings of peace may be reckoned certain comedies, operas, farces, and extravaganzas which, if the war had lasted another six weeks, would in all probability never have been written. I had no taste for a line regiment, so I obtained, by competitive examination, an assistant clerkship in the Education Department of the Privy Council Office, in which ill-organized and ill-governed office I spent four uncomfortable years. Coming unexpectedly into possession of a capital sum of £300, I resolved to emancipate myself from the detestable thralldom of this baleful office; and on the happiest day of my life I sent in my resignation. With £100 I paid my call to the Bar (I had previously entered myself as a student at the Inner Temple), with another £100 I obtained access to a conveyancer's chambers, and with the third £100 I furnished a set of chambers of my own, and began life afresh as a barrister-at-law."

He joined the Northern Circuit in 1866, and attended the Old Bailey as well as various assizes and sessions on his circuit. The law, for which Gilbert had an intense love all through his life, a love obvious in so much of his writing, did not offer him an income, and in his first two years at the Bar he only earned seventy-five pounds. He practised for

four years, averaging five clients a year. One of these clients was a Frenchman, and Miss Edith Brown tells an amusing story of his showing his appreciation of his counsel's powers by throwing his arms round Gilbert's neck and kissing him in open court. Gilbert wrote a story round his maiden brief. It appeared in the *Cornhill* of December, 1863. It began :

"Late on a certain May morning, as I was sitting at a modest breakfast in my 'residence chambers,' Pump Court, Temple, my attention was claimed by a single knock at an outer door, common to the chambers of Felix Polter, and of myself, Horace Penditton, both barristers-at-law of the Inner Temple.

"The outer door was not the only article common to Polter and myself. We also shared what Polter (who wrote farces) was pleased to term a 'property' clerk, who did nothing at all, and a 'practicable' laundress, who did everything. There existed also a communion of interest in teacups, razors, gridirons, candlesticks, etc.; for although neither of us was particularly well supplied with the necessaries of domestic life, each happened to possess the very articles in which the other was deficient. So we got on uncommonly well together, each regarding his friend in the light of an indispensable other self. We had both embraced the 'higher walk' of the legal profession, and were patiently waiting for the legal profession to embrace us."

The first brief was to defend a woman prisoner—and the defence was not a success.

"No sooner had the learned judge pronounced this sentence than the poor soul stooped down, and, taking off a heavy boot, flung it at my head, as a reward for my eloquence on her behalf; accompanying the assault with a torrent of invective against my abilities as a counsel, and my line of defence. The language in which her oration was couched was perfectly shocking. The boot missed me, but hit a reporter on the head, and to this fact I am disposed to attribute the unfavourable light in which my search for the defence was placed in two or three of the leading daily papers next morning."

Gilbert explained his failure at the Bar by the fact that he was "a clumsy and inefficient speaker," suffering from "an unconquerable nervousness," which prevented him from doing justice to his clients. As a matter of fact, in the latter years of his life he was a singularly felicitous speaker. During part of these years of struggle Gilbert lived in a boarding-house at Pimlico. Among his fellow-boarders was the father

of C. B. Fry, the famous cricketer, who remembered Gilbert mainly for his propensity to practical joking. Mr. Percy White, the novelist, tells us:

“Sometime in the late ‘sixties,’ before Lewis Fry (then engaged to my sister) married her, he told me of an extraordinarily amusing fellow named Gilbert, who was living in the same boarding-house somewhere in South Belgravia, then known as Pimlico. Gilbert, I remember Fry said, was in a Highland military regiment. He was also, like Fry, a clerk in the Civil Service. I cannot remember the nature of the jokes which Gilbert was reported to play at the expense of the denizens of the now never to be localized boarding-house. But dramatically to appear (after dinner) from the folds of the drawing-room curtains and surprise the ladies, then stalking Hamlet-like across the room—disappearing in a tragic silence ‘teeming with mystery,’ was one of his pranks. The whole thing is a dim memory. Still, I remember that Fry was much impressed by his fellow-boarder’s powers of really amusing ‘ragging,’ as it would be called in these degenerate times. Fry (who had a Civil Service pension) died on the Riviera at the age of nearly eighty.”

The Highland uniform is explained by the fact that after his determination not to be a professional soldier, Gilbert served for some years as an officer in the Militia Battalion of the Gordon Highlanders, and wore the kilt. Dancing the Highland reel was, by the way, one of his many accomplishments.

Like many other briefless barristers, he turned to his pen as a means of livelihood. Gilbert himself told the story of his first literary effort:

“My very first plunge took place in 1857, I think, in connection with the late Alfred Mellon’s Promenade Concerts. Madame Parepa-Rosa (at that time Middle Parepa), whom I had known from babyhood, had made a singular success at those concerts with the laughing song from *Manon Lescaut*, and she asked me to do a translation of the song for Alfred Mellon’s play-bill. I did it; it was duly printed in the bill. I remember that I went night after night to those concerts to enjoy the intense gratification of standing at the elbow of any promenader who might be reading my translation, and wondering to myself what the promenader would say if he knew that the gifted creature who had written the very words he was reading was at that moment standing within a yard of him. The secret satisfaction of

knowing that I possessed the power to thrill him with this information was enough, and I preserved my incognito.

"The thing was a laughing song, and went like this:

" 'An entertaining story,  
A fiction amatory,  
About a legal star,  
Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!  
A legal dignitary  
Particularly wary,  
A member of the bar,  
Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!'

"And so on. The French original ran thus:

" 'C'est l'histoire amoureuse,  
Autant que fabuleuse,  
D'un ancien fier-à-bras,  
Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!  
D'un tendre commissaire,  
Que l'on disait sévère,  
Et qui ne l'était pas,  
Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!'

"You see the English is in strict metrical form, yet exactly reproduces the rhythm of the French. I afterwards used the same words in my 'respectful perversion' of Tennyson's *Princess*."

Three years afterwards he was a member of the staff of *Fun*, and his first play was produced at Christmas, 1866. On August 6, 1867, Gilbert married Miss Lucy Blois Turner, the daughter of an Indian officer, at St. Mary Abbot's, Kensington. Gilbert and his wife had known each other for some three years before they married. They first lived in a house in Eldon Road, Kensington, and a little more than a year afterwards Gilbert bought the lease of 8, Essex Villas, Kensington, where they remained for about eight years.

## CHAPTER II

### GILBERT AND *FUN*

IN the *Theatre* autobiography Gilbert says :

“ In 1861 *Fun* was started under the editorship of Mr. H. J. Byron. With much labour I turned out an article three-quarters of a column long, and sent it to the editor, together with a half-page drawing on wood. A day or two later the printer of the paper called upon me with Mr. Byron’s compliments, and staggered me with a request to contribute a column of copy and a half-page drawing every week for the term of my natural life. I hardly knew how to treat that offer, for it seemed to me that into that short article I had poured all I knew. I was empty. I had exhausted myself. I didn’t know any more. However, the printer encouraged me (with Mr. Byron’s compliments) and I said I would try. I did try, and I found to my surprise that there *was* a little left, and enough indeed to enable me to contribute some hundreds of columns to the periodical throughout his editorship, and that of his successor, poor Tom Hood ! ”

*Fun* at its heyday may well have been the formidable rival of *Punch*. Of its first editor, H. J. Byron, Gilbert spoke warmly to his friend of later days, Rowland-Brown, maintaining that he had been “ paid, and paid well for every verse he ever wrote.” He preserved an accountable but uncritical admiration for the Byron burlesques. Sometimes when he and Rowland-Brown were alone together at night, he would recite lengthy extracts to his friend from the reams of this jingle. It may be that gratitude invested them with sparkle to the disciple soon so far to surpass his master. Among the group of writers working for *Fun* were Hood, Jeff Prouse, Harry Leigh Brunton, Paul Gray, W. R. Rands, Tom Robertson, and Clement Scott. Gilbert’s passing note of regret for “ poor Tom Hood ” may be rightly held an inadequate index

to their connection. The following advertisement appeared in *Fun* of July 26, 1867:

"Now ready at the FUN Office, '*Robinson Crusoe or the Injun Bride and the Injured Wife*. A burlesque by H. J. Byron, W. S. Gilbert, T. Hood, H. S. Leigh, Arthur Sketchley, and 'Nicholas,' performed at the Theatre Royal, Haymarket, on Saturday, July 5th. N.B.—The proceeds of the sale will be added to the fund for the benefit of the widowed mother of the late Paul Gray."

There is no evidence that Gilbert was ever taught drawing, but he was as frequent a contributor to *Fun* with his pencil as with his pen. The question as to the exact date of the first contribution is difficult to answer, for more reasons than that he frequently wrote them anonymously without even the "W.S.G." which for years preceded the more famous signature of "Bab." Gilbert certainly writes in the *Theatre* of the founding of *Fun* in 1861 as if he had almost immediate association with it. Yet the "W.G." occasionally signing pictures in the first volume was so different a draughtsman to the "W.S.G." of 1863, to make it improbable they were identical. Moreover, Gilbert was always tenacious of his second initial. In the 1863 volume there are several conventionally comic large woodcuts by Gilbert entirely unlike the jaunty *Bab Ballads* thumb-nail illustrations. In one of them there is the familiar gibe at faded or charmless womanhood, which reappeared in the operas and for which he was so often attacked. A "gushing spinster" in a huge crinoline inquires of a heavy swell at the Crystal Palace, "Oh, Mr. Jones, don't you adore the antique?" to be answered, "Oh—ah yes—in marble." In "You were sober, of course?" the questioner is a typical common-law barrister of the days when Gilbert fell in love with law and incongruously hailed her away from her own dusty purlieus to fairyland. The drawing, "And you ask me to convict upon such evidence as this?" is not lacking in cleverness. In another drawing two girls are looking at a new bonnet. "Well, I don't think

much of it," says Clara. "They wear nothing else in Paris," retorts Edith. The headline is, "Then they ought to be ashamed of themselves." "The Day after the Ball" and the drawing in which "little Popper" shows Mrs. P. how Miss Rose Leclerq played Manfred are neither very distinguished. This purely imitative work vanished with the advent of the Perverse Fairy. Judged by artistic tests, the "Bab" folk may be all wrong. Judged by popular acclaim, they are, in Gilbert's own words, "as right as right can be." A glance at any of the countless efforts to copy them proves them inimitable. The characters in the multitudinous tiny figures, in those hundreds of heads drawn for the prose or verse of *Fun*, not to speak of larger sketches in line, always have a quaint fascination.

The low rate at which Gilbert appraised his early work is obvious, for with the exception of the "Babs"—and not all of them—nothing has been republished except a mere handful of the short stories that he wrote in considerable numbers. Yet to the true Gilbertian, nothing is quite negligible. *Fun* is indeed the cradle of the operas, and by no means through the "Babs" alone. The prose sketches are sown with embryo ideas, often developed later with triumphant effect. The Gilbertian spirit—tricksey, elusive, magical—speedily begins to haunt these columns. The Puck-like imp of Topsy-Turvydom plays pranks foreshadowing those of the libretti. Gilbert did all sorts of work for *Fun*. Occasionally he wrote the parliamentary sketches, and once he attempted political satire in would-be Byronic vein. Scorn for Napoleon III was an obsession of *Fun*, and Gilbert was apparently in hearty agreement with the editorial policy. He read and loved Victor Hugo, and this literary enthusiasm doubtless inspired his hatred for "Napoleon the Little." Gilbert was manifestly in dead earnest when he wrote *The Lie of a Lifetime ; or, The Modern Augustus*, and because it was his only essay in politics, we reproduce part of it here.



THE LIE OF A LIFETIME;

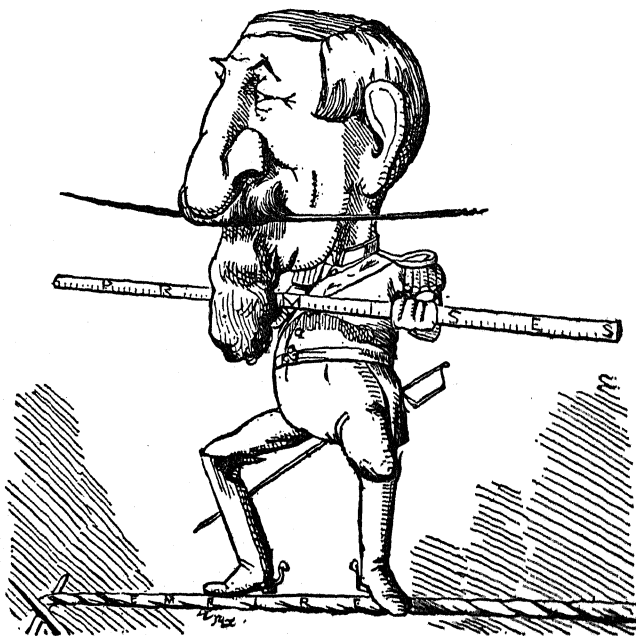
or,

Random Readings of Traitorous Traits, Past Passages And Present Prospects

of

THE MODERN AUGUSTUS.

A Serious Serial in Several Sections.



SECTION THE FIRST.

*His inauguration as President on the 20th December, 1848.*

Silence! silence everywhere! a silence vast and deep,  
Like the solemn, silent stillness of death's all-subduing sleep.  
And the troops with anxious faces stood motionless and dumb;  
Hush'd briefly then (*for ever soon*) the French Assembly's hum.  
'Twas in chill and dull December, and the swift on-coming gloom  
Was an omen, *then unheeded*, of French freedom's hapless doom.

Were there none among that body, like the Augur Priests of old,  
 Who could read the coming future and its murderous page unfold?  
 None! or if there were, they spoke not! all were silent in that room,  
 And the lamps all feebly struggled with the swift on-coming gloom.

The President rises; he speaks, words flow  
 From his lips in sentences solemn and slow;  
*Sentences!* ay, but no hearers could know  
 Their result would be terror, and bloodshed, and woe!

\* \* \* \* \*  
 \* \* \* \* \*

He announced the selection,  
 By ballot election,  
 Of LOUIS NAPOLEON, to be then and there  
 Installed, with due pomp, in the President's chair.  
 There was anxious confusion; a passage was clear'd;  
 The HOUR had arrived! and the MAN soon appeared!  
     With Jewish nose, and narrow brow,  
     Small snaky eyes whose flashings show  
     (As molten lava gleams below  
     The dread abyss with lurid glow,  
     Before an Etna's mighty throe  
     Rains death around) the lengths he'd go  
 To gain an end: he reach'd the tribune, made his bow,  
 And though by nature subtle, slow,  
 His energy o'ercame his sloth  
 As solemnly, and nothing loath,  
 With LIPS ALONE he took THE OATH,  
     An oath to serve the nation: keep intact  
     The French Republic, as a glorious fact;  
     The people's rights to rev'rence and defend,  
     Alike from foreign foe and traitor friend!  
     An oath, scarce made 'ere broken; *his next breath*  
     To keep that oath had doom'd himself to death  
     (To have, 'ere axe his felon neck had press'd,  
     The Badge of Honour torn from off his breast).  
 A doom more sternly just, more richly earn'd,  
 Had never been, since ADAM'S sons have learn'd  
 To be ambitious—false—to rob and lie—  
 To honour rogues and worship perjury.  
 He took the oath! nor yet with that content,  
 The innate vileness of the *man* found vent  
 In words uncall'd for—words so smooth and pure  
 That e'en his foes fell victims to the lure,  
 And all believed (save one who had resign'd,  
 With the calm grandeur of a noble mind

And honest self-control, that mission high)  
 His bearing was too grand To CLOAK A LIE.  
 Deluded fools! he did but act a part,  
 Lied with his *lips*, and scorn'd you in his *heart*.  
 But hear him! let him speak! "The tribune's right  
 Is yours," MARRAST exclaim'd with air polite.  
 Then from those lips, so recently profaned,  
 Pour'd forth the protestations of unfeign'd  
 Attachment to the laws that then obtain'd;  
 Respect for him, who previously in power  
 Had kept France glorious to that present hour.  
 He said his oath should ever guide his will;  
 That, as a *man of honour*, he'd fulfil  
 His sacred duty—would regard as foes  
 To France, himself, and Liberty, all those  
 Who strove to change, by lawless word or deed,  
 That which the great French People had decreed.  
 He paus'd; he ceas'd, and then a vast grand shout,  
 "Long live the great Republic," loud rang out—  
 A roar as when the wind-toss'd waters reach,  
 And spend their fury vainly on the beach.  
 So loud, so long the shout, none heard the cry  
 That burst from thy rent heart, oh Liberty!  
 (Yet three years thence, the echo shrill and clear  
 Of that wild wail chill'd ev'ry mortal ear,  
 'Mid anguish'd groans that marked "the night of fear!")

Guiltless of mortal passion's ebb and flow;  
 Conscious of wounds, that laid their honour low,  
 The sullied lilies hung their heads of snow;  
 While Gallia's guardian spirit saw with woe  
 Her once proud Eagle—now—a carrion crow!

The illustrations, also Gilbert's work, are rather savage caricatures. In one of them (see p. 15), referring to the Emperor's marriage, a preposterous manikin in a toga blesses Napoleon and Eugénie, an almost unrecognizable pair.

"Beauty and the Beast I jine  
 In this agreeable Valentine."

That a second series of *The Lie of a Lifetime* was demanded and supplied was assuredly due more to prevailing political rancour than to literary merit. Never again did Gilbert repeat the experiment of political satire, and to the end of his days

he maintained an utter indifference to politics, which he scarcely ever mentioned in conversation.

His pencil-marks in his own set of *Fun* show that he was occasionally dramatic and art critic, before the few illustrated notices signed "Bab" appeared. There is little acrimony, and no venom in his criticisms. Praise for the plays of the Robertson he loved is lavish. His notes of admiration for



many who, like Lady Bancroft and Sir John Hare, were destined to fame, are full of discernment. Other players are treated with considerable candour. In view of his later resentment of what was often unfair and unappreciative criticism, his own work as a critic has a double interest. Writing in May 1865, under the heading "From Our Stall," Gilbert says:

"Miss Bateman has made her appearance in a third character, Bianca, in DEAN MILMAN's sparkling tragedy, *Fazio*. With every dis-

position to deal gently with a very charming young lady, it is impossible to say that Miss Bateman's appearance in this lively little piece is at all calculated to advance her professional reputation. It is really time that the truth were spoken about this young lady; she is not, and, as far as we can form an opinion, never will be a great actress. She has beauty, grace, and dignity and when you have said that you have said all. Her calmer scenes are cold and unimpassioned, and her ebullitions of jealousy or anger are simply, the demoniacal ravings of a female fiend. Even the audience on Monday last began to see this, for there was no symptom of a 'call' before the end of the third act.

"It is only fair to Miss Bateman to state that that dismal actor Mr. Jordan was playing in the same piece, and it is impossible to say how much his depressing presence may have told upon the animal spirits of the audience. The excessively disagreeable part of Aldebella was played with great care and judgment by Mrs. Billington. When we say that the piece was put upon the stage as all Adelphi pieces are, it will be understood that the audience saw more 'flies,' 'grooves,' dead wall, dirty scenery, and unsatisfactory 'supers' than they would at any theatre in Whitechapel. We will qualify our condemnation. Let the playgoer wait outside until the third act approaches its close, and then let him enter the theatre and witness the scene between Bianca and that unfortunate silent senator whom she collars, cries over, and abuses. This gentleman's demeanour under those trying circumstances is a thing to be remembered. Having seen this, the playgoer cannot do better than turn into Evans's without delay, or the curtain will rise on the fourth act.

"A pleasant little drama, by Mr. PALGRAVE SIMPSON, was produced at the Prince of Wales's Theatre on Wednesday. *A l'air Pretender* is based upon the story of the loves of Will Seymour and Lady Arabella Stuart, and explains how one Susanna Spritt (Miss Marie Wilton) connived at their escape from the fortress in which the unfortunate lady was imprisoned. The jealousy excited in the bosom of a certain soldier, one Gideon Gubbins, by Susanna's constant meetings with Will Seymour, who, in the disguise of a pedlar and subsequently of a soldier, is present in the fortress to assist his wife in effecting her escape, is the exciting cause of the greater portion of the laughter which decided the success of the piece.

"It is utterly impossible to speak too highly of Miss Marie Wilton's performance in the part of Susanna. In every class of character undertaken by this young lady, from Juliet to Pippo, and that a tolerably extensive range, she is equally charming.

"By the bye, Mr. Leigh Murray is about to take a complimentary benefit at Drury Lane. This admirable actor has for months past been confined to his room, and we are sure that it is only necessary to mention this fact to send crowds of sympathizers into the theatre on that occasion."

Miss Marie Wilton was, of course, afterwards Lady Bancroft. In 1879, Gilbert wrote a blank-verse version of the Faust legend, which he evidently regarded as too grave a story for burlesque, for, fifteen years before, he dealt trenchantly with a travesty produced at the St. James's Theatre.

"Fancy the exquisite story of *Faust and Marguerite*, in which the most profound thoughts that can engage the mind of men have been so grandly interpreted by GOETHE, turned into a travesty for the St. James's. The public will be quite prepared after this to see underlined for immediate production, at the same theatre, a burlesque founded on *Paradise Lost*. The old legend of Dr. FAUSTUS, who, when he was quite old enough to know better, sold himself to a nameless personage that he might have back his youth and go in for reckless enjoyment of everything, is anybody's property, and has been often cleverly presented in grotesque fashion before, but MARGUERITE is too pure and delicate a creation to be reduced to a lodging-house wench, and only thought good enough to suck sherry cobbles at Cremorne.

"What had Mrs. CHARLES MATHEWS done that she should be dragged down to the lowest level of burlesque after having gained deserved honours in the highest range of comedy? Why should Mr. CHARLES MATHEWS be called upon to do penance for any possible transgression by standing in flaming tights and crimson 'fly' before a respectable audience as a travestied MEPHISTOPHELES? Is a hideous skeleton shaking its bony joints in mid-air a comic view of the end of mortality? Is a grim embodiment of death in a crinoline hopping about the boards in a *bal masqué* a funny realization of the German legend setting forth the horrors of a Walpurgis night on the Hartz mountains? There is no occasion to pause for a reply.

"If audiences can be found to tolerate these representations out of respect to those compelled to take part in them, the indignation of society will find strong expression in other ways. The good taste which should govern the extravagances of burlesque is here altogether wanting, and the piece should be removed from the bills with what haste the manager can make."

Here already there is a revolt against the fashionable burlesques, which were eventually to be killed by the Savoy operas—to come to life again, alas, rechristened as "musical comedies" and "revues," generally with no greater humour or taste. Gilbert could not abide music-hall humour. In 1865, *Fun* published the following verses from his pen:

## MUSINGS IN A MUSIC-HALL.

BY A YOUNG MAN FROM THE COUNTRY.

When a man sticks his hat at the back of his head,  
 Tell me, Oh, Editor, why do they roar?  
 And then, when he pushes it forward instead,  
 Why do they scream twice as loud as before?  
 When an elderly gentleman rumples his hair,  
 Why do they all go delirious as well?  
 When he uses a handkerchief out of repair,  
 Why do they, why do they, why do they yell?

When a vulgar virago is singing her song,  
 Why must she offer herself as a wife?  
 Why give applause about ten minutes long  
 When a baby of seven imperils its life?  
 What does a singer intend to imply  
 By "Whack fol the larity, larity, lay"?  
 What can he hope to convey to me by  
 Singing "Rum tiddity, iddity!" eh?

These *Fun* comments on the drama may be concluded with an amusing letter on pantomimes published on February 20, 1864.

## ON PANTOMIMIC UNITIES.

To the Editor of *Fun*.

"From week to week I have entertained a hope that you would scarify with your powerful pen (can a man *scarify* with a powerful pen? I am sure I don't know) a feature of pantomimic business, which, to a man of my delicate theatrical susceptibilities, seems to shriek aloud for reform. I allude to the preposterous disregard of the unities of time and place which appears to obtain in every pantomime anybody ever saw. But the pantomime season is drawing to a close; circumstances, over which harlequin has no control, have dimmed the lustre of his spangles; columbine dances as if she were paid for it; clown and pantaloons are beginning to hate the sight of each other; and yet the scarifying article has not appeared. So I have set myself the task of penning this letter to you in order that editorial attention may be directed to the matters of which I complain. I say 'editorial attention' because, in point of fact, you editors are the people who educate the public taste. The members of the public are possessed of no critical power whatever. They take what is given them, but suspend their judgment until they have read that of the morning papers, and then they speak. As for the managers, they are

but a medium of introducing the author to the public—a species of theatrical conduit-pipe, too often, alas! stopped up.

“Sir, I am a conscientious theatre-goer, and one who respects a pantomime rather on account of its indissoluble connection with the names of RICH, GRIMALDI, and EDMUND KEAN, than because I derive any pleasure whatever from the performance itself. And the reason of this is, because the whole comic business, from the transformation scene (which becomes every year more like a five-shilling valentine) to ‘ALBERT and ALEXANDRA, and May They be Happy!’ in a red-fire vapour bath, requires reform.



“The abuse begins at the beginning. Without the slightest reference to the time or *venue* of the introduction, the four pantomime characters are in all pantomimes respectively dressed in the selfsame costume. Now this is not as it should be. To preserve some little unity between the ‘introduction’ and the comic business, the costume of the pantomime characters, while it sufficiently resembled that they now wear for purposes of identification, should be modified to suit the requirements of the age in which the ‘introduction’ is supposed to have taken place.

“Thus: If the pantomime is founded on the affecting story of ‘CORIOLANUS,’ CORIOLANUS (who would, of course, be changed into harlequin) should, in the comic scenes, wear a kind of patchwork toga, which would sufficiently show that he *was* a noble Roman, and that he *is* a harlequin. In the same way the costume of VIRGILIA (his wife) as columbine, and that of TULLUS AUFIDUS as clown, might be so modified as to suggest the Roman bride, as well as the columbine, in the one case, and the Volscian monarch, as well as the clown, in the other. Of course, the scenes of the comic business should be Roman, if the introduction is Roman. Great fun might be got out of such



a scene as the Gulf in the Forum with clown (as MARCUS CURTIUS) on a hobby-horse, about to leap into the chasm, but contriving, at the last moment, to pitch pantaloon (who, I am afraid, would, of necessity, be VOLUMNIA, CORIOLANUS's mother) into it instead.

"Is clown mortal or immortal? He appears to possess the privilege of doing whatever he likes to the constituted authorities without fear of any unpleasant consequences. This is the way in which he usually treats policemen prior to knocking their heads off, which is murder; but nobody ever heard of a clown being hung or even condemned to death. Also, he possesses (in conjunction with CORIOLANUS) the privilege of leaping through brick walls. These attributes would seem to argue immortality, yet if he puts the hot end of a poker into his pocket, it burns him. How can you reconcile these discrepancies?



"Again—Is transformation to harlequin a punishment or a reward? Of course, I know it is nominally a reward of constancy, but, in point of fact, a more fearful punishment it would be hard to conceive. From a gay young prince, the popular 'sad dog' of the introduction, he is changed into a dumb, spangled, fishy thing, calculated to excite no feeling other than the profoundest contempt. Is he mortal or not? He may be cut into pieces and yet be re-united, and apparently be none the worse for the operation. He may be rammed into a cannon and blown from it with impunity. But, on the other hand, he is compelled to seek the ordinary domestic couch at night; he is in the habit of taking furnished apartments; and it is but too evident that he perspires freely. On the whole, I am disposed to think he must be the Wandering Jew.

"Again—What relation does pantaloon bear to clown? Of course, I know that, in the original Italian comedy, pantaloon was clown's master, but in modern pantomime these relations appear to be reversed. He is now the humble imitator of his more ingenious friend's eccentricities. He suffers fearful indignities at the hands of clown. When he

falls he is picked up by clown in the manner shown in the margin. It is difficult to imagine anything more utterly humiliating than the being picked up in this manner. He is buffeted, insulted, and bullied in an insupportable manner, and yet pantaloons and clown are always together. Are these two bound together by any mysterious tie, and if by any, by what? and if not, why not, and how otherwise?

"Why is the confiding shopman's business invariably transacted on the pavement? We don't find Mr. GRAVES, of Pall Mall, striking bargains with customers outside his shop-door, or engaging party-coloured shopmen on the mere strength of their own uncorroborated recommendations.

"One word from you might set this all right."

For some years Gilbert contributed to *Fun* a number of paragraphs with large initial letters. Not only because his first contributions to *Fun* are likely to be among them do they arrest the attention, but because they reveal Gilbert in the guise of Don Quixote. The then less stringent law of libel made all things possible to one naturally audacious. When a girl employed by a fashionable milliner died of starvation and over-work, Gilbert attacked her "murderer" with burning words of indignation. Case after case did he castigate. He would describe a scene in court, flagellate legal delinquents by name, and conclude: "For our own part, we give the rowdy portion of the Bar warning. Whenever a case of this kind occurs, we shall present the public with a full-length portrait of the offending barrister." Nor was this a vain threat; at least one merciless instance is extant. If Gilbert used his tongue as a sword when upon the Bench in the zenith of his success, he wielded his pen with equal fearlessness from the first.

The "Comic Physiognomist" began his long, merry course in *Fun* on November 7, 1863. The following extracts give an indication of its character.

"The nose is (or should be) the most prominent feature of the face. Its local relation to the other facial organs is so generally known that it is only necessary to state that it springs from the valley below the brow of the 'man-mountain,' that it pursues an undulating and irregular course for some two or three inches, and that it finally discharges

itself into the pocket-handkerchief. As many rivers owe their existence to the dissolved snow with which their native hills are covered, it may be as well to state that the human nose is in no way indebted for its origin to the melting eyes from between which it often rises. It is furnished with two nostrils and a bridge. The latter is much used by the eyes when they run over to pay each other a friendly visit. It is easily amused—'tickled with a straw'—and is sometimes called the neighs-all organ for obvious reasons. It is an effective wind instrument, its most popular performance being '*Suoni la tromba intrepida!*' preceded by a running arrangement of the 'Light Catarrh.' "

### OF THE VARIOUS ORDERS OF NOSES.

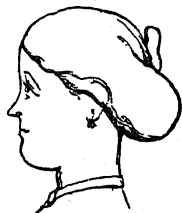
"Goodness knows!"—*Popular Ejaculation.*

"Innumerable orders of architecture are employed in the conformation of the human nose. The Grecian is, of course, the order to which most attention is paid, although it is an order which is very rarely given. Among those most frequently occurring we find:

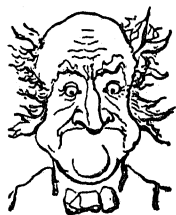
"No. 1.—THE NOSE ARROGANT.—This is accurately depicted in the accompanying sketch. It is the property of the peer of the fashionable novel and the wealthy cotton-broker of real life. It is often found in Parliament: is accustomed to receive deputations and to express itself, on those occasions, in general terms without committing itself to anything. Although distantly affable to bodies aggregate, it is haughtily insolent to individuals.



"No. 2.—THE NOSE TANTALIZING.—Commonly found under demure, round hats at the seaside, and dancing with the best set of men at evening parties. It can be saucy without being fast, epigrammatic without being personal. It possesses a keen sense of the ridiculous, and is usually found between a pair of big brown eyes.



"No. 3.—THE NOSE CONTRADICTORY.—This is a variety which is extremely common among people of the churchwarden stamp. It is also found (in a subdued form) at bar messes, and under the wigs at the C.C.C. It is a subject which most of us have often been tempted to touch, as it presents plenty to catch hold of. Want of space, however, and a relentless editor, compel us to pass on.



"No. 4.—THE NOSE DEFIANT.—This is a nose from life. It is the property of our landlady, and we are sorry to say that she always brings it in with her when she comes for the weekly rent. It is too horrible a subject to dwell upon, so we will not apologize for quitting it rather abruptly. We told her last week, that if she didn't take care we would put her in *Fun*, and now we've done it, and we don't care.



"No. 5.—THE NOSE DISCONTENTED.—Common among middle-aged bachelors of a punctilious turn of mind. Has rows with club-waiters, box-keepers at theatres, and all railway porters. Gets into a cab and orders the driver to take him as far towards Charing Cross as he can for a shilling. Is devotedly attached to little children, and never thinks of swearing at them."



The "C.P." obviously became an immediate favourite, for when a second series succeeded in May, 1864, it was heralded by a large illustration in the best "Bab" manner. "The Men we Meet" of 1867, though the sketches are signed "Bab," are still announced as by the "C.P." These are nearly all most amusing, with witty text and humorous drawings. In "The C.P. in Love," Gilbert came nearest to drawing a pretty girl, and his justification "Homo non Vir" is essentially Gilbertian.

In "The C.P. at a Levee," a solitary quotation from Dickens should be noted for rarity, for Gilbert scarcely ever cited the work of others either in his own or in his letters.

"To quote Mr. Dick Swiveller, 'Under such a combination of staggerers, no man can be considered a free agent.'"

"The C.P. did not go to court to kotoo to Princes, although the kotooing to Princes happened to be one of the incidents of his progress through St. James's Palace. He went to court in order to set at rhest—rest, that is—confound those 'h's'—a question which for many years had sore perplexed him—that is to say, 'Why do people go to Levees?' They cannot all go to see why people go, as the philosopher did. Of course, he is well aware that there are some people whose position in society demands that they should show themselves at these singular gatherings once a year, or so, but these form but a small portion of those who attend. They go as a duty, and as a very tiresome duty, and very bored they all look. What the C.P. wanted

to know is, what Ensign Parker, of the Barbadoes Militia, Cornet Tompkins, of the Afghanistan Irregulars, Brown, the big brewer, Green, the great grocer, can possibly want over and over again at St. James's? The C.P. is bound to admit that his doubts upon these points were not satisfactorily set at rest. Neither did two collateral questions, not bearing directly upon Levees, but growing out of them, meet with satisfactory solutions. What do people want in Yeomanry Regiments? And why join the Hon. Corps of Gentlemen-at-Arms? The C.P. does not refer to the Gentlemen-at-Arms under the new organization, but to the corps as it was three or four years since. 'Wilkins determining to be a Gentleman-at-Arms' is a sketch which the C.P. regrets he has not space for in this chapter.

"The C.P. has invariably noticed that, with all their faults, Scotch gentlemen are more accessible to strangers than any other inhabitants of the British Isles; so he took the gallant Highlander on his left into his confidence, and requested him to pilot the philosopher through the gilded salon that leads to the Throne Room—a duty which the Highland gentleman discharged with so much twangy urbanity, that the C.P. will say nothing ill-natured about him—except that he cannot possibly imagine what that gentleman could see in a Levee to induce him to come up all the way from Edinburgh to attend it."

The *Bab Ballads* were not indexed in *Fun* under the name they immortalized until 1869, long after the majority had sparkled in its columns. Not only did Gilbert include a large number of lyrics from the operas in the collection he selected personally in 1897, but also a sprinkling of the more serious verses often published anonymously in *Fun*. It seems, therefore, as if he at least thought the odd familiar name appropriate to all he wrote in rhyme. In the green-covered first edition issued by Hotten, Gilbert excuses publication in book-form with his invariable modesty, on the ground that "the verses sub-titled 'much sound and little sense' seem to have won a sort of whimsical popularity." They are not, as a rule, he confesses, founded on fact. "I have ventured to publish the little pictures with them, because while they are certainly quite as bad as the ballads, I suppose they are not much worse." The pictures are beyond criticism. They defy it. Gilbert perpetrated an artistic crime in condemning probably twenty innocent *Babs* to be buried alive, pictures and all.

He once told Rowland-Brown how he arrived at his marvellous names, insisting that "they came naturally to the rhythm of the verse, and that the pictures were never begun before the ballad was in form." For more than one reason it is interesting to quote in full the short preface, dated from 24, The Boltons, Kensington, in 1876:

"The *Bab Ballads* appeared originally in the columns of *Fun* when that periodical was under the editorship of the late Tom Hood. . . . The period during which they were written extended over some three or four years; many, however, were composed hastily, and under the discomforting necessity of having to turn out a quantity of lively verse on a certain day in each week. As it seemed to me (and to others) that the volumes were disfigured by these hastily written impostors, I thought it better to withdraw from both volumes such ballads as seemed to show evidence of carelessness or undue haste. . . .

"It may interest some to know that the first of the series, 'The Yarn of the Nancy Bell,' was originally offered to *Punch*, to which I was at that time an occasional contributor. It was, however, declined by the then Editor on the ground that it was 'too cannibalistic for his readers' taste.' "

The *Fifty Bab Ballads* of 1876 possibly include the best of them. They came, were seen, and conquered. Of Gilbert in this his own province it can be said: "There is no one beside him and no one above him." The *Babs* bore fruit—the radiant operas as compact of the art which conceals art. They are impervious to literary freaks of fashions, safeguarded by "the fairy shield" of genius. The marvel they could be written to order regularly, it might be said mechanically, leaves critics in blank wonder. 1867 may be called the apogee of the ballads, for a sequence of the best quoted succeed each other with freshness and vitality, an absolute originality making them unique. Gilbert's love of the sea is evident in a number of the best ballads, and *Captain Reece* and the other sea ballads have always been favourites with sailors. In this connection a correspondent of the *Strand Magazine* has drawn attention to a "lost" ballad which we have been unable to trace. He says:

"It was published, I think, about the same time, or shortly after, *Captain Reece*, and, much to the regret of many sailors, it did not appear again in any of the later editions of the ballads. I do not remember the title of it. It was a sailor's ballad, and began thus :

" 'To sail the seas is my delight,  
To bend a bowline on a bight,  
To fish the Crojic yard and haul  
On topsail lifts true bliss I call.'

"It ends with :

" 'Hurrah ! till cruel fate forbids,  
I'll live midst marlinspikes and fids,  
And dissipate all thoughts of gloom  
With bobstays and a stuns'l boom.  
If life with sorrow crowns my cup,  
I'll send the mizzen topsail up,  
And with a cheer the chafing gear  
I'll calmly bid to disappear.'

"This was quite as much a favourite with sailors in my young days as the *Mystic Selvagee*, which has survived," writes this correspondent. "And any verses of the old one which I have been able to repeat to sailors have always given them much pleasure and amusement."

If the *Nancy Bell* was the first *Bab* to be written, *Captain Reece* takes pride of place in the first edition.

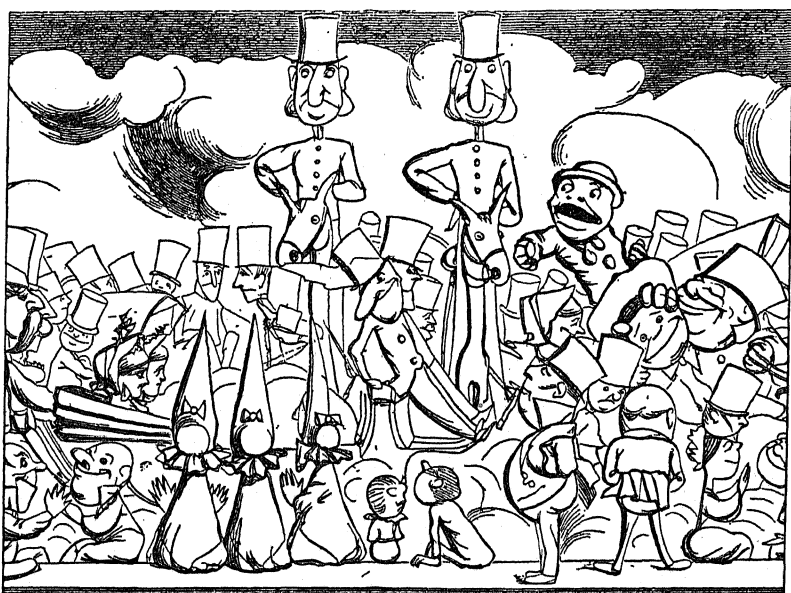
Gilbert was, as has been said, married in 1867, and one of his few lapses of memory would seem to have been made when he told Rowland-Brown that "*Prince Il Baleine* was done on my way to Folkestone on my honeymoon." The "Prince," however, figures in *Fun* in 1869, and is scarcely likely to have been held over for two years. It embodies a favourite Gilbertian theme, and is not included in either of the volumes. It is printed with others of the lost *Babs* in the Appendix.

In May, 1864, Gilbert published a Derby poem, which is interesting because the chorus is an anticipation of the rhyming of the "Greenery Yallery, Grosvenor Gallery" song of *Patience* :

"Trudging along, two dozen strong,  
Wearily, drearily, riff-raff,  
Swells at them stare, singing the air  
Of Saturday's opera, 'Piff-paff.'

Handful of coin all of them join  
 Rambling, scrambling, pick up;  
 Rowing for more, won't have 'encore,'  
 Frightening, tightening, stick up'  
 Posturers two come into view,  
 Rummer set, summerset throwing;  
 Over they turn (don't try and learn),  
 All that they get for it owing.

"Palery alery, smokery, jokery, rambling,  
 Scrambling, crash along, dash along—  
 Down to the Derby," etc.



*The Three Bohemian Ones* is the best of the lost *Babs*. In an embarrassment of riches we may dispense with *Sir Galahad the Golluptious*, which came dangerously near to being a complete failure. But how could Gilbert have had the cruelty to reject *The Three Bohemian Ones*? They are essentially men whom to know is to love, and they are drawn just as we know they are. We appreciate them as we appreciate *Belial Blake* or *Ferdinando*, or "the strange young sorter



with expressive purple eyes." Later editions should restore them to their admirers, and make a thousand new ones.

To quote the sub-title of *Utopia*—and sub-titles are a Gilbertian weakness—the *Bab Ballads* are "Flowers of Progress." They heralded the approach of Gilbert the genius with a flourish of their jolly trumpets. The man in the street and the man in the study both listened and rejoiced.

In 1898 the *Bab Ballads* were published in a volume with a large number of lyrics taken from the Savoy operas, which had before been issued as "Songs of a Savoyard." The 1898 volume contains a hundred and seventy-five different poems. Gilbert says in his preface :

"I have always felt that many of the original illustrations to the *Bab Ballads* err gravely in the direction of unnecessary extravagance. This defect I have endeavoured to correct through the medium of the two hundred new drawings which I have designed for this volume. I am afraid I cannot claim for them any other recommendation."

The new illustrations were all drawn on a table that still stands in the window of the billiard-room at Grim's Dyke. Excellently humorous as most of them are, they are on the whole inferior in quaintness to the original "Bab" illustrations of *Fun*.

The *Bab Ballads* have an established position in English literature. They stand by themselves. There is nothing to which they can be compared. They are ingenious, musical, humorous. They show amazing aptitude for finding the right word. They are Gilbert, and when Gilbert was himself, he was like no other writer who ever put pen to paper. The *Bab Ballads* evidence an apparently inexhaustible invention. To every subject Gilbert brings some amazing topsy-turvy idea :

"It also was a Jew  
Who drove a Putney bus,  
For flesh of swine, however fine,  
He did not care a cuss."

"The common sin of babyhood—objecting to be dressed—  
If you leave it to accumulate at compound interest,  
For anything you know, may represent, if you're alive,  
A burglary or murder at the age of thirty-five."

An interesting question is why the *Bab Ballads* maintain a perennial freshness, while humorous poems of the same period, some of them written by able hands, have become neglected and almost forgotten. The answer is that the *Bab Ballads* are original. Gilbert could, and often did, write extremely good parodies. To quote one example, when the chivalrous Ferdinando is dispatched by his lady-love Elvira to discover the author of "those lovely cracker mottoes," before she would accept his hand and heart, he naturally approached the most popular poets of his day before he undertook arduous journeys to "Patagonia, China, and Norway." Of his treatment by eminent poets Ferdinando reports :

" Henry Wadsworth only smiled and said he had not had the honour,  
And Alfred too disclaimed the words which told so much upon her."

Ferdinando flourished in the days of Martin Tupper, whose *Proverbial Philosophy*, it may be remembered, was highly praised by Queen Victoria and her Consort. When Ferdinando called on his Elvira, they "talked of love and Tupper." Naturally, therefore, inquiry was made of Martin Tupper as to whether he was the author of the cracker mottoes.

" Mr. Martin Tupper sent the following reply to me :—

" ' A fool is bent upon a twig, but wise men dread a bandit.'

Which I think must have been clever, for I didn't understand it."

This parody is really delicious and apposite. There is another reference to Tupper in *Sir Barnaby Rämpton Boo* :

" Now Nelly's the prettier, p'raps, of my gals,

But, oh ! she's a wayward chit ;

She dresses herself in her showy fal-lals,

And doesn't read Tupper a bit !

O Tupper, philosopher true,

How do you happen to do ?

A publisher looks with respect on your books,

For they *do* sell, philosopher true !"

Generally, however, Gilbert preferred using his creative faculty for origination rather than for humorous imitation—a wise course, when one remembers that all the world knows the *Bab Ballads*, while such a book as *Bon Gaultier Ballads*,

written by Aytoun, the author of *Lays of the Scottish Cavaliers*, and Theodore Martin, which rapidly went through fourteen editions and was illustrated by Leech and Doyle, is now entirely forgotten. The parodists parodied writers who are themselves no longer read, and died with them. The author of the *Bab Ballads* exploited his own personality, and is among the immortals. Another best seller of the seventies was Cholmondeley Pennell's *Puck on Pegasus*, which contained a series of illustrations by Millais, Leech, Tenniel, Doyle, Phiz, and Noel Paton. The parodies are stilted and ineffective, not to be compared with the work of more modern writers, and are now properly forgotten. But even the sound intrinsic literary merit of Calverley has not saved him from partial eclipse, and, with all his merits, many of the *Fly-leaves* are withered. The mellifluous parodies of Jean Ingelow are damp squibs in a generation that reads Jean no longer. The sheer cleverness of *The Cock and the Bull* seems rather senseless caricature in an age that has learned to appreciate Browning without exaggerated enthusiasm. The fact is that parody is necessarily ephemeral. At its best it reflects the critical mood of a day. It is interesting in this connection to recall that Gilbert disliked both Browning and Meredith, and that he parodied neither. Edward Lear and Lewis Carroll are in Gilbert's jocund company, but the writings of neither has the claim of the *Bab Ballads* to literary immortality. The Old Lady of Smyrna and the incomparable Jabberwock himself do not possess the qualities of Captain Reece and the Bumboat Woman, and the lover of Annie Protheroe, for Gilbert's creations were the first figures outlined for future genre pictures—the Savoy operas—full of movement and warm with colour. It would be difficult to exaggerate one's gratitude to Lear and Lewis Carroll, but their achievements are miniature compared with those of the English Aristophanes.

It would be absurd to endeavour to decide which is the best of the *Bab Ballads*. If the test be the greatest number of well-worn quotations, the laurel would probably fall to

*Etiquette*, which was first published in the *Graphic*. Who does not know the lines :

“ Down went the owners—greedy men whom hope of gain allured.  
O, dry the starting tear, for they were heavily insured !

“ The oysters at his feet impatiently he shoved,  
For turtle and his mother were the only things he loved.

“ He longed to lay him down upon the shelly bed and stuff :  
He had often eaten oysters, but had never had enough.”

*Ellen M'Jones Aberdeen* is an example of Gilbert's extraordinary aptitude in nomenclature. His explanation that irresistibly comic names always came with the metre, does not explain the variety. Balzac, it will be remembered, tramped miles before he saw the name Z. Marcas over a mean shop, and was transfixed by its suitability for his special purpose. Dickens's inspiration in nomenclature often failed him, as witness his Hawkes and Verisophts and Mutanheds, and Forster tells how laborious a business was the baptism of Martin Chuzzlewit and David Copperfield. Gilbert had no such difficulty. The names “just came,” and when they had come, he used them with masterly skill. Few versifiers would find Macpherson Clonglocketty Angus M'Clan, the patronymic of the bagpipe-player who produced an air from his instrument, a convenient opening for a quatrain ; but Gilbert contrived it. Patterson Corbay Torbay is the very ideal name for the kilted Sassenach who “could not assume an affection for pipes.”

“ One morning the fidgetty Sassenach swore  
He'd stand it no longer—he drew his claymore,  
And (this was, I think, extremely bad taste),  
Divided Clonglocketty close to the waist.”

If the best *Bab Ballad* is the best illustrated, many will be inclined to quote *Gentle Alice Brown*, as seen in the *Fifty* before her coiffure was modernized. Her lover, a “young sorter,” in his Elizabethan garb, is in all respects worthy of

her. She dons an even larger chignon when making her terrible confession to a rather Protestant-looking Father Paul:

“ A pleasant-looking gentleman, with pretty purple eyes,  
I’ve noticed at my window, as I’ve sat a-catching flies;  
He passes by it every day as certain as can be—  
I blush to say I’ve winked at him, and he has winked at me!”

Lest the reader should be shocked, the last avowal was originally printed in tiny type. If sheer originality be accepted as the hall-mark of supremacy, then *Prince Agib* is possibly the foremost achievement of the *Bab Ballads*. Its metre is captivating, and its particular charm is the unsolved mystery of the plot. In this poem the unmusical Gilbert makes happy use of a musical term, jokingly mixed up with medical jargon:

“ They played him a sonata—let me see!  
‘ *Medulla oblongata* ’—key of G.  
Then they began to sing  
That extremely lovely thing,  
‘ *Scherzando! ma non troppo, ppp.* ’ ”

The deft use of the most unexpected words is carried to its apogee in the third verse:

“ Strike the concertina’s melancholy string!  
Blow the spirit-stirring harp like anything!  
Let the piano’s martial blast  
Rouse the echoes of the past,  
For of Agib, Prince of Tartary, I sing!

“ Of Agib, who, amid Tartaric scenes,  
Wrote a lot of ballet music in his teens:  
His gentle spirit rolls  
In the melody of souls—  
Which is pretty, but I don’t know what it means.

“ Of Agib, who could readily, at sight,  
Strum a march upon the loud Theodolite.  
He would diligently play  
On the Zoetrope all day,  
And blow the gay Pantechnicon all night.”

Eleven of the fifty *Bab Ballads* are concerned with Churchmen or Church matters—that is, if Father Paul, the confessor of *Gentle Alice Brown*, be included.

The others are : *The Rival Curates*, *Sir Macklin*, *The Phantom Curate*, *The Fairy Curate*, *The Bishop of Rum-Ti-Foo*, *The Bishop of Rum-Ti-Foo Again*, *The Reverend Simon Magus*, *Lost Mr. Blake*, *The Bishop and the 'Busman*, and *The Reverend Micah Sowsls*. We have suggested that Gilbert showed that he shared his father's dislike of what used to be called "ritualism" in *Lost Mr. Blake*, who, it may be remembered, "mocked at dalmatics." But lest it should be thought that he was numbered with the persecutors of the Anglo-Catholics, it should be remembered that he added :

"He used to say that he would no more think of interfering with his priest's robes than with his church or his steeple."

The rejected *Babs* include more than one dealing with the question of Sunday observance, and it need hardly be said that Gilbert had no sort of sympathy with the harsh dictates of Victorian Sabbatarianism. Nine of the fifty *Bab Ballads* deal with the Navy. All without exception rank high. They are : *Captain Reece*, *The Yarn of the Nancy Bell*, *The Bumboat Woman's Story*, *The Captain and the Mermaid*, *The Martinet*, *The King of Canoodle-Dum*, *The Sailor Boy to his Lass*, *Etiquette*, and *The Mystic Selvagee*. In this last Gilbert used his considerable nautical knowledge with amusing ingenuity :

"Upon your spars I see you've clapped  
Peak-halliard blocks, all iron-capped ;  
I would not christen that a crime,  
But 'twas not done in Rodney's time.

It looks half-witted !

Upon your maintop-stay, I see,  
You always clap a selvagee ;  
Your stays, I see, are equalized—  
No vessel, such as Rodney prized,  
Would be thus fitted.

"And Rodney, honoured sir, would grin  
To see you turning deadeyes in,  
Not *up*, as in the ancient way,  
But downwards, like a cutter's stay—  
You didn't oughter !

Besides, in seizing shrouds on board,  
 Breast backstays you have quite ignored ;  
 Great Rodney kept unto the last  
 Breast backstays on topgallant mast—  
 They make it taughter."

Despite Gilbert's military ambition and service, the military *Babs* are fewer than the naval. The two best are *Thomas Winterbottom Hance*, with whom "no swordsman ever could compare," and the irresistible *Hongree and Mahry*, a humorous travesty of transpontine melodrama, which begins :

"The sun was setting in its wonted west,  
 When Hongree, Sub-Lieutenant of Chassoors,  
 Met Mahry Daubigny, the Village Rose,  
 Under the Wizard's Oak—old trysting-place  
 Of those who loved in rosy Aquitaine.

"They thought themselves unwatched, but they were not,  
 For Hongree, Sub-Lieutenant of Chassoors,  
 Found in Lieutenant-Colonel Jooles Dubosc  
 A rival, envious and unscrupulous,  
 Who thought it not foul scorn to dog his steps,  
 And listen, unperceived, to all that passed  
 Between the simple little Village Rose  
 And Hongree, Sub-Lieutenant of Chassoors."

The best of the legal *Babs* is unquestionably *Baines Carew, Gentleman*, the genial attorney :

"Whene'er he heard a tale of woe  
 From client A or client B,  
 His grief would overcome him so,  
 He'd scarce have strength to take his fee."

*To a Little Maid* and *The Troubadour* are concerned with female prisoners, and in the second there is an inimitable comic warder. *Emily, John, James, and I* tells a tale of condign punishment for crossing the course on Derby Day. It is a most musical *Bab*.

The stage *Babs* are *Only a Dancing Girl*, with its pretty touch of genuine feeling, *At the Pantomime*, and *The Pantomime Super to His Mask*, a rather grim poem. *The Haughty Actor* is perhaps more legal than theatrical, but in it Gilbert expresses

his contempt for the egregious vanity that is often the characteristic of lesser players.

Anything like a detailed analysis of the *Bab Ballads* would be merely ridiculous, and they may be left with the conclusion that, with all their other qualities, they are English in idea and construction, untranslated into any other tongue, and absolutely untranslatable.



## CHAPTER III

### GILBERT'S PROSE

IN addition to his contributions to *Fun*, Gilbert, at the beginning of his literary career, contributed articles and stories to the *Cornhill*, *London Society*, *Tinsley's Magazine*, and *Temple Bar*. He also acted for some time as the London correspondent of a Russian newspaper called the *Invalide Russe*, and wrote dramatic criticisms for the *Illustrated Times*.

The collection of what he himself regarded as his best short stories was published in volume form in 1869, and reissued a few months before his death. It contains nineteen stories and sketches, and the volume is called *Foggerty's Fairy*, from the first story in the collection. In the preface Gilbert says that none of the tales except *Comedy and Tragedy* was written with the idea of subsequent dramatization; but three others, *Foggerty's Fairy* itself, *Creatures of Impulse*, and *The Wicked World*, were afterwards turned into plays, and the *Elixir of Love* is the basis of the plot of *The Sorcerer*.

There is a very evident Dickens influence in Gilbert's short stories, and Gilbert, as a short story writer, has the same affection for fairies and humorous supernaturalism as he has in his verse and his libretti. *Foggerty's Fairy* is an excellent story, which possibly may have supplied Mr. Hackett with the germ of the idea which he developed so cleverly in his farce, *Ambrose Applejohn's Adventure*. Foggerty was a confectioner in the Borough Road, and a fairy off the top of a twelfth cake told him that he had only to eat one of the cake's ornaments to obliterate any deed from his past life and to become

somebody entirely different. He took the fairy at her word, and at once found himself the captain of a pirate ship, to change again, in circumstances of great peril, into a wealthy and unscrupulous financier. When the financier was in the dock (the familiar end of so many financial careers), again the twelfth-cake ornament came to Foggerty's assistance, and he returned to the place from whence he came and was once more Foggerty of the Borough Road.

*An Elixir of Love* is another fantastic and amusing story. *Johnnie Pounce* is sentimental, and might well have been written by Dickens himself. In it there is something of the Dickens faculty for vivid description in a phrase. For example :

"Then there was Joe Round, Mrs. Joe Round, and Miss Joe Round, and Miss Joe Round's young man, in a pink fluffy face and blue stock with gold flies. Joe Round was deputy usher in the Central Criminal Court. He was a big full-voiced man with a red face, black curly hair, and a self-assertive manner. He had a way with him which seemed to say: 'I am Joe Round. Take me as you find me or let me go, but don't find fault.' Mrs. Joe Round was a beautiful specimen of faded gentility. She was an Old Bailey attorney's daughter, and a taste for exciting trials had led her in early youth to the C.C.C., where she saw Joe Round, fell in love with his big voice, and married him."

The volume of stories contains a sketch which Gilbert calls *Actors, Authors, and Audiences*, in which he supposes that the author of an unsuccessful play is tried by a jury of the audience. He is charged with "having written and caused to be produced an original stage play which has not come up to the expectations of the audience," and in the evidence Gilbert, with rather bitter wit, summarizes the points of view of managers and actors—points of view that probably remain much the same to-day as they were sixty years ago. Cross-examined by the author, the manager says :

"I did not read your play before accepting it, because I do not profess to be a judge of a play in manuscript. I accepted it because a French play on which I had counted proved a failure. I had nothing ready to put in its place. I was at my wits' end. I have been there before. I soon get there. I have had no special training for the position of manager. I am not aware that any special training is requisite.

It is a very easy profession to master. If you make a success, you pocket the profits; if you fail, you close your theatre abruptly, and a benefit performance is organized on your behalf. Then you begin again."

Here is an extract from the evidence of the leading lady:

"I regard your play as highly creditable to you in a literary sense, but it is wholly undramatic. It is undoubtedly a thoughtful composition. In point of fact, it is too thoughtful. It is a fact that the stage-manager suppressed several small characters. It is true that two minor parts were fused with mine to make it worthy of my reputation. I did not charge extra for rolling the three parts into one. I did it entirely in the author's interest. I do not remember your objecting to the mutilation of your play. It is not a circumstance that would be likely to dwell in my mind. I have never been hissed in my life. The parts I have played have frequently been hissed. No one has ever hissed me."

The low comedian says:

"I did my best with the part. I bought a remarkably clever mechanical wig—(laughter)—for it—(laughter)—but it was useless. (*Roars of laughter.*) In my zeal in behalf of the Prisoner I introduced much practical 'business' into the part that was not set down for me. (*Laughter.*) I did not charge extra for introducing practical business; I introduced it solely in the Prisoner's interest. No doubt the Prisoner remonstrated, but I knew what an audience likes much better than he does. (*Laughter.*) The part was soundly hissed—even the introduced scene with the guinea-pig and the hair-oil." (*Roars of laughter.*)

The singing chambermaid is also called:

"The part I played was that of a simple-minded young governess in a country rectory, who is secretly in love with the Home Secretary. I did not see why such a character should not sing and dance in the intervals between her pathetic scenes. She might be supposed to do so in order to cheer her spirits. I do not consider 'Father's pants will soon fit brother' an inappropriate song for such a character. There is nothing immoral in it. I see no reason why a broken-hearted governess should not endeavour to raise her spirits by dancing an occasional 'breakdown.' I would not dance one in every scene, because that would not be true to nature. I see no objection to her dancing one now and then. A governess would probably have to teach her pupils to dance, and she would naturally practise occasionally to keep her hand in. No, I *do* not mean her foot—I mean what I say, her hand. I wore short petticoats because the audience expected it of me. I see

no reason why a governess in a country vicarage should not wear short petticoats if she has good legs."

There is evidently a world of bitter experience behind the writing of *Actors, Authors, and Audiences*.

In a paper also included in the volume, called *Unappreciated Shakespeare*, Gilbert develops a favourite thesis of his, that the English people do not read Shakespeare, and that if they go to performances of Shakespearean plays, it is because they feel at a disadvantage in knowing nothing whatever about the plots. He says:

"The truth is that Shakespeare is not light reading. But an absolute ignorance of the works of Shakespeare is most properly held to be disgraceful, and so when it comes to pass that a play of Shakespeare is adequately presented, people rush to see it in order to familiarize themselves, in the readiest and easiest and most agreeable way, with works with which it is considered—and most rightly—that all Englishmen should be familiar."

Knowing so little, they do not realize the common mutilation of the play as it is performed:

"But who cares? Who resents these atrocious liberties? *I* do and the reader does, but who else? A few, perhaps, but how many? Who calls out from the pit to the 'star' who deliberately cuts out the last two acts of *Henry VIII* because he has no part in it—'You insufferably vain and sacrilegious impostor, how dare you lay your mutilating hand upon the immortal works of a genius whom we revere as we revere our religion? Restore the fourth and fifth acts of this great play! Perform them at once, or up go your benches!' *I* am in the habit of publicly addressing the star-tragedian in these words, and so is the reader; but who else does so? No one else—probably because it is not generally known that the two acts have been suppressed. As for the 'star,' in all probability he has never read those acts. Why should he? There is no Wolsey in them.

"In truth—and it is a lamentable truth—the *popular* knowledge of Shakespeare is almost entirely derived from performances of mutilated versions of his plays. Of those plays in their entirety, and of the plays that are seldom or never performed, the mass of Englishmen know little or nothing."

Gilbert permitted no actor to add or to take away from his own plays, and he demanded for Shakespeare what he secured for himself.

The dramatized version of *The Wicked World* was produced

at the Haymarket, with the Kendals in the cast, and afterwards supplied Gilbert with the idea of the libretto of *Fallen Fairies*, the opera for which Mr. Edward German composed the music.

Among the stories not included in the volume is one of a series of six tales arranged on the Dickens plan and published in 1866. The tales are called *The Five Alls*. Tom Hood wrote the introduction, W. J. Prowse wrote *The King's Story*, Clement Scott *The Parson's Story*, T. W. Robertson *The Soldier's Story*, T. Archer *The Farmer's Story*, and Gilbert *The Lawyer's Story*. It is rather a stilted essay in sentimentalism, with the Crimean War as a background—no better and no worse than the other contributions to the series. Like most writers for the stage, Gilbert had an obvious tendency to be rhetorical when writing narrative fiction, and his rhetoric, anyhow in this one instance, is definitely theatrical. Here is a characteristic extract :

“Captain Brereton, you are an uncompromising liar. You have taken advantage of my presence here to undermine Miss Bessemer's affection for me. You left the Crimea in possession of my fullest confidence. You were intimately acquainted with my engagement to Miss Bessemer, and in my blind confidence I was happy in the belief that your presence in her society would keep the recollection of me more fully before her. And you have availed yourself of your intimacy with my mother, with her, and with me, to substitute yourself in my place. You may possibly think this behaviour consistent with your character as a gentleman. In my opinion it is that of an unmitigated scoundrel.”

The fact, of course, was—and this will become more evident as Gilbert's later work is considered—that no literary artist was ever less a realist than he. Fairyland was his home, and in his short stories, as in his plays, he is happiest and most successful in the fantastic land of make-believe. It is obvious that it is infinitely more difficult to make the fantastic convincing in a play than in a story. Gilbert was triumphant in the more difficult task, and in the easier he was sufficiently successful in *Foggerty's Fairy* to make one believe that, had the theatre not called him as its own, he would have won a considerable reputation as a story-writer.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE FIRST PLAYS

IN the fragment of autobiography printed in the *Theatre* Gilbert has himself told the story of his beginning as a dramatist :

“ Of the many good and staunch friends I made on my introduction into journalism, one of the best and staunchest was poor Tom Robertson, and it is entirely to him that I owe my introduction to stage-work. He had been asked by Miss Herbert, the then lessee of St. James's Theatre, if he knew anyone who could write a Christmas piece in a fortnight. Robertson, who had often expressed to me his belief that I should succeed as a writer for the stage, advised Miss Herbert to entrust me with the work, and the introduction resulted in my first piece, a burlesque on *L'Elisir d'Amore*, called *Dulcamara* ; or, *The Little Duck and the Great Quack*. The piece, written in ten days and rehearsed in a week, met with more success than it deserved, owing, mainly, to the late Mr. Frank Matthews' excellent impersonation of the title-rôle. In the hurry of production there had been no time to discuss terms, but after it had been successfully launched, Mr. Emden (Miss Herbert's acting manager) asked me how much I wanted for the piece. I modestly hoped that, as the piece was a success, £30 would not be considered an excessive price for the London right. Mr. Emden looked rather surprised, and, as I thought, disappointed. However, he wrote a cheque, asked for a receipt, and, when he had got it, said : ‘ Now take a bit of advice from an old stager who knows what he is talking about : never sell so good a piece as this for £30 again.’ And I never have.

“ My first piece gave me no sort of anxiety. I had nothing in the matter of dramatic reputation to lose, and I entered my box on the first night of *Dulcamara* with a *cœur léger*. It never entered my head that the piece would fail, and I even had the audacity to pre-invite a dozen friends to supper after the performance. The piece succeeded (as it happened), and the supper-party finished the evening appro-

privately enough, but I have since learnt something about the risks inseparable from every 'first night,' and I would as soon invite friends to supper after a forthcoming amputation at the hip-joint.

"Once fairly afloat on the dramatic stream, I managed to keep my head above-water. *Dulcamara* was followed by a burlesque on *La Figlia del Reggimento*, called *La Vivandière*, which was produced at what was then the Queen's Theatre, in Long Acre, and excellently played by Mr. J. L. Toole, Mr. Lionel Brough, Miss Hodson, Miss M. Simpson, Miss Everard (the original Little Buttercup of *H.M.S. Pinafore*), and Miss Fanny Addison. The *Vivandière* ran for 120 nights, and was followed at the Royalty Theatre by the *Merry Zingara*, a burlesque on the *Bohemian Girl*, in which Miss M. Oliver, Miss Charlotte Saunders, and Mr. F. Dewar appeared. This also ran 120 nights, but it suffered from comparison with Mr. F. C. Burnand's *Black-Eyed Susan*, which it immediately followed, and which had achieved the most remarkable success recorded in the annals of burlesque.

"Then came the opening of the Gaiety Theatre, for which occasion I wrote *Robert the Devil*, a burlesque on the opera of that name, and in which Miss Farren appeared. This was followed by my first comedy, *An Old Score*, which, however, made no great mark. But there was a circumstance connected with its production which may serve as a hint to unacted authors. As soon as I had written the piece, I had it set up in type—a proceeding that cost me exactly five guineas. I sent a copy of it to Mr. Hollingshead, and within one hour of receiving it he had read and accepted it. He subsequently informed me that he read it at once *because it was printed. Verb. sap.*"

The two first pages of the published version of *Dulcamara* are sufficient indication of its character.

## A NEW AND ORIGINAL EXTRAVAGANZA

entitled

DULCAMARA ;

or, the

LITTLE DUCK AND THE GREAT QUACK.

First Produced at the

THEATRE ROYAL, ST. JAMES'S,

December 29, 1866.

By

W. S. GILBERT, ESQ.



GILBERT AS AN OFFICER IN THE GORDON HIGHLANDERS





DULCAMARA;  
or,  
THE LITTLE DUCK AND THE GREAT QUACK.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

NEMORINO (a Neapolitan peasant, of whom you will hear more presently) . . .	<i>Miss Ellen McDonnell</i>
BELCORE (a Sergeant of Infantry, who is "cut out" for a good soldier by nature—and by Nemorino) . . . . .	<i>Mr. F. Charles</i>
DR. DULCAMARA . . . . .	<i>Mr. Frank Matthews</i>
BEPP0 (his <i>Jack</i> -pudding—a mystery, whose real nature is concealed by a mysterious <i>Pike</i> -crust) . . . . .	<i>Mr. Stoyle</i>
TOMASO (a Notary, keeping company with Gianetta; "Tomaso and Tomaso, and Tomaso, creeps with his pretty <i>paysanne</i> "—Shakespeare) . . . . .	<i>Mr. Gaston Murray</i>
ADINE (the little Duck, who, it is hoped, will nevertheless be found to be very long in the bill). . . . .	<i>Miss Carlotta Addison</i>
GIANETTA (the pretty <i>paysanne</i> , to whom Tomaso <i>pays an</i> overwhelming amount of attention) . . . . .	<i>Miss Eleanor Bufton</i>
CATERINA (an exquisite villager). . . . .	<i>Miss Marion</i>
MARIA (another) . . . . .	<i>Miss Guinness</i>

Soldiers, Male and Female Peasants, Fisher Girls, etc.

SCENE 1. EXTERIOR OF ADINA'S FARM.

Arrival of Belcore and his warriors.

SCENE 2. INTERIOR OF NEMORINO'S HOUSE.

SCENE 3. A VILLAGE MARKET PLACE.

Dance of Soldiers and Peasants, and arrival of Dr. Dulcamara.  
The Mystery! The Love Philtre!

SCENE 4. INTERIOR OF ADINA'S FARM.

Preparations for the marriage of ALL the village girls.

SCENE 5. THE VILLAGE GREEN.

The Potion Works—Discomfiture of Belcore—Astounding Solution  
of a Remarkable Mystery, and Triumph of Agricultural Innocence,  
typified by

A GRAND ALLEGORICAL TABLEAU OF LOVE'S DEVICES!

THE MUSIC ARRANGED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF  
MR. VAN HAMME.

H. J. Byron, who was responsible for Gilbert's introduction to the columns of *Fun*, was the author of many successful farces, including *Our Boys*, and of innumerable burlesques, the principal characteristics of which were a long series of appalling puns. It was inevitable that, in writing burlesque, Gilbert should in some measure have followed the Byron model, though, as has been shown in one of his dramatic criticisms that we have quoted, his sense of fitness was jarred by its extravagant tastelessness. *Dulcamara* and *Robert the Devil*, with which the Gaiety Theatre was opened by John Hollingshead in 1868, are much like the ordinary burlesques of the time. The 1866 number of *Warne's Christmas Annual*, edited by Tom Hood, contains a burlesque by Gilbert of *Ruy Blas*. He described it as a preposterous piece of nonsense for private reproduction, and as it has never been printed, except in this long-forgotten annual, we quote from it as an example of Gilbert's early burlesques. It is written in rhymed couplets, with a pun almost in every line.

In the list of *dramatis personæ*, the major-domo, Don Sallust, the master of Ruy Blas, is described as "a man with a *good deal* to look after, and who *made yer at home, oh*, when you came to stay with his master."

Don Sallust has been banished on account of an intrigue with one of the Queen's maids, and in revenge he disguises Ruy Blas as his cousin, Don Cesar de Bazan, and helps him to make love to the Queen herself. The Queen is lonely and unhappy :

QUEEN. Unhappy Queen—unhappy maiden, I !  
 In vain to get a wink of sleep I try ;  
 But wander, dressing-gowny and night-cappy,  
 I seldom get a nap—I'm so un-nappy !  
 Oh, gentle sleep—apostrophized as sich  
 By some late monarch—I forget by which—  
 Oh, how I nightly long for that blest time  
 When, bathed in sleep, I need not talk in rhyme,  
 Or be prepared to sing about my cares  
 In parodies of all the well-known airs !

## SONG.—QUEEN.

Air—" *A-hunting we will go.*"

The king announces every morn,  
In summer or in snow,  
To me, his faithful wife forlorn,  
That a-hunting he will go !  
What kind of pleasure can he find  
In tearing through his parks,  
In search of game of various kind,  
Confining his remarks  
To " Hey ! ho ! Chevy !  
Hark forward ! Hark forward ! Tantivy," etc.  
If this goes on much longer, why  
I'm sure that I shall die.

If he'd confine his hunting to  
The usual time of year,  
I'd not complain—but all in vain,  
The season's over here.  
How can he care to spend the day  
With huntsmen and with hounds,  
Expressing all he wants to say,  
In such unmeaning sounds  
As " Hey ! ho ! Chevy !  
Hark forward ! Hark forward ! Tantivy," etc.  
If this goes on much longer, why  
I'm sure that I shall die.

In the third scene of the burlesque, Don Diego, one of the court noblemen, proposes to his fellows a plan for filling their pockets :

" In Queen Maria's kitchen, pounds, I find,  
Are lost in perquisites of every kind ;  
The servants' kitchen stuff, alone, I'm told  
Is worth a hundred thousand pounds in gold.  
The fees that tradesmen to the butler pay  
Amount to several hundred pounds a day.  
The Christmas boxes, too ! They give, I hear,  
A box upon the opening of each year !  
The butler vanishes—so does the tea—  
Best seconds disappear, and, like the bee,  
They get them *money* all the day from flours,  
These seconds, gentle sirs, may be well *'ours*.

(During these lines, Ruy has been expressing, in pantomime, the profoundest disgust of Don Diego's proposal.)

Stop all the servants' perquisites, the pests !  
Cram all their *wastes* into our private *chests* !  
Reduce their rations and cut down their wages,  
Butlers and footmen, chambermaids and pages !  
This is what I propose with all submission."

In the end, Ruy Blas and Don Sallust fight a duel. Sallust is killed and Ruy Blas is left happily with the Queen. The finale has something of Gilbert's characteristic deftness of rhyming, and might, indeed, have been used in one of the later libretti :

QUEEN. Oh ! all is settled, and is just as jolly as can be.

RUY. An easy independence I perceptibly foresee ;  
I killed the fellow, dearest girl, and we shall soon be one.

QUEEN. I thought you would, 'cause in a play it's usually done !  
(Air changes to "*Diamants de la Couronne*.")

RUY (*to audience*).

List, I implore, one moment more  
To me, before you seek the door :  
You'd best ignore deceitful lore—  
But that, I'm sure, you knew before !

QUEEN. But as for me, I'm going to be  
Restored to he, as you may see :  
Why should I be melancholee  
Or pipe my 'ee, I do not see !

(Don Sallust *springs up and joins the chorus*.)

SALLUST. And let me say a word, I pray,  
Before the play is o'er to-day.  
All men, they say, become the prey  
Of habits they in youth obey.  
The moral's trite, when I was quite  
A little wight I learnt to bite,  
And in the fight you saw to-night  
He killed me quite—and serve me right !

*Chorus :*

But as for she, she's going to be  
Restored to he, as you may see !  
Why she should be melancholee,  
Or pipe her 'ee, we do not see.

In writing burlesque, as in writing sentimental comedy, Gilbert was doing work that other men could do. It was only when his work was something that no one else dared attempt that his genius was evident. In everything else he was distinguished above his fellows, but it must be remembered that the English theatre in the sixties and seventies of last century was for the most part the home of sheer banality. Then Gilbert was a giant among pigmies. When he wrote the Savoy libretti, he was a giant among giants.

But Gilbert did succeed in giving humour and distinction to Victorian burlesque. In *La Vivandière*, produced in 1868 at the old Queen's Theatre in Long Acre, with Toole, Lionel Brough, and Henrietta Hodson in the cast, he began to find himself in the theatre as he had already found himself in *Fun*, and to exploit the distinctive whimsical humour of the *Bab Ballads* and the Savoy operas. In one scene he pillories the bad manners of English tourists. Lord Margate is talking to his companions at the Grands Mulets on Mont Blanc :

LORD MARGATE. " You all remember when we left the shore  
Of Rule Britannia, we in concert swore  
We'd do our best on reaching these localities  
To show our undisputed nationalities,  
To show contempt in everything that we did :  
Tell me, my comrades, how we have succeeded ? "

MARQUIS OF CRANBOURNE ALLEY. I've sworn at all who've hindered  
my researches.

LORD PENTONVILLE. I've worn my hat in all the foreign churches.

LORD PECKHAM. On all their buildings I've passed verbal strictures  
And poked my walking-stick through all their pictures.  
I only carry it about for that use.

MARQUIS OF CRANBOURNE ALLEY. I've decorated all their public  
statues.

LORD PENTONVILLE. When Frenchmen have conversed with me or  
you,  
We've always turned the talk to Waterloo.

LORD MARGATE. I've half a dozen Frenchmen tried to teach  
 That I'm twelve times as brave and strong as each,  
 And showed that this corollary must follow,  
 One Englishman can thrash twelve Frenchmen hollow,  
 In fact, my friends, wherever we have placed ourselves,  
 I may say we have thoroughly disgraced ourselves.

Both as man and artist, Gilbert was typically and absolutely English, but he never tired of laughing at the jingo patriotism which is based on folly and bad manners. The gibe in *La Vivandière* is repeated in *H.M.S. Pinafore* in the well-known lines :

“ He is an Englishman !  
 For he himself has said it,  
 And it's greatly to his credit,  
 That he is an Englishman !  
 That he is an Englishman !

“ For he might have been a Roosian,  
 A French, or Turk, or Proosian,  
 Or perhaps Itali-an ;  
 Or perhaps Itali-an !

“ But in spite of all temptations  
 To belong to other nations,  
 He remains an Englishman ! ”

It is repeated again in *The Darned Mounseer*.

“ I shipped, d'ye see, in a Revenue sloop,  
 And off Cape Finisterre,  
 A merchantman we see,  
 A Frenchman, going free,  
 So we made for the bold Mounseer,  
 D'ye see ?  
 We made for the bold Mounseer !

“ But she proved to be a Frigate—and she up with her ports,  
 And fires with a thirty-two !  
 It come uncommon near,  
 But we answered with a cheer,  
 Which paralysed the Parley-voo,  
 D'ye see ?  
 Which paralysed the Parley-voo !

“ Then our Captain he up and he says, says he,  
‘ That chap we need not fear—  
We can take her, if we like,  
She is sartin for to strike,  
For she’s only a darned Mounseer,  
D’y’e see ?  
She’s only a darned Mounseer ! ’

“ But to fight a French fal-lal—it’s like hittin’ of a gal—  
It’s a lubberly thing for to do,  
For we, with all our faults,  
Why, we’re sturdy British salts,  
While she’s but a Parley-voo,  
D’y’e see ?  
A miserable Parley-voo !

“ So we up with our helm, and we scuds before the breeze,  
As we gives a compassionating cheer ;  
Froggee answers with a shout  
As he sees us go about,  
Which was grateful of the poor Mounseer,  
D’y’e see ?  
Which was grateful of the poor Mounseer !

“ And I’ll wager in their joy they kissed each other’s cheek,  
(Which is what them furriners do,)  
And then they blessed their lucky stars  
We were hardy British tars  
Who had pity on a poor Parley-voo,  
D’y’e see ?  
Who had pity on a poor Parley-voo ! ”

Gilbert was often the victim as well as the inventor of paradox, and there is something delightfully comic in the fact that this song, obviously intended as a gibe at the futile “ one jolly Englishman can lick all three ” boastings, was regarded by certain French critics as a gross insult to their nation, and years after it was written the supposed insult prevented a Gilbert and Sullivan production in Paris. In this connection one may note the jokes at expansive patriotism in *Utopia Limited*, where the idea of *La Vivandière* reappears again.

Between 1869 and 1872 Gilbert wrote a great many sketches for the famous German Reed entertainments at the Gallery



of Illustration in Regent Street. The music of these sketches was composed by Frederick Clay, who in 1871 introduced Gilbert to Sullivan. As an example of Gilbert's constant habit of re-using plots and ideas, it may be mentioned that one of these comediettas, which was first played in 1869, was expanded into *Ruddigore* years afterwards. Arthur Cecil, Corney Grain, Leonora Braham, and Fanny Holland all made their stage débuts in the plays that Gilbert wrote for the German Reed entertainments.

To return to the autobiography, Gilbert says:

"I had for some time determined to try the experiment of a blank-verse burlesque in which a picturesque story should be told in a strain of mock-heroic seriousness; and through the enterprise of the late Mrs. Liston (then manageress of the Olympic) I was afforded an opportunity of doing so. The story of Mr. Tennyson's *Princess* supplied the subject-matter of the parody, and I endeavoured so to treat it as to absolve myself from a charge of wilful irreverence. The piece was produced with signal success, owing in no small degree to the admirable earnestness with which Miss M. Reinhardt invested the character of the heroine. Her address to the 'girl graduates' remains in my mind as a rare example of faultless declamation. It was unfortunately necessary to cast three ladies for the parts of the three principal youths, and the fact that three ladies were dressed as gentlemen disguised as ladies, imparted an epicene character to their proceedings which rather interfered with the interest of the story. The success of the piece, however, was unquestionable, and it led to a somewhat more ambitious flight in the same direction.

"Immediately after the production of *The Princess*, I was commissioned by the late Mr. Buckstone to write a blank-verse fairy comedy on the story of *Le Palais de la Vérité*, a subject which had been suggested to me by Mr. Palgrave Simpson. The piece was produced at the Haymarket Theatre with an admirable cast, which included Mr. Buckstone, Mr. Everill, Mrs. Kendal, Miss Caroline Hill, and Miss Fanny Gwynne, and it ran about 150 nights. A day or two before the production of the piece, I was surprised to receive a packet containing twenty-four dress-circle seats, twenty-four upper-box seats, twenty-four pit seats, and twenty-four gallery seats, for the first night. On inquiry, I discovered that by immemorial Haymarket custom these ninety-six seats were the author's nightly perquisites during the entire run of a three-act play. I assured Mr. Buckstone that I had no desire to press my right to this privilege, which seems to be a survival of the old days when authors were paid in part by tickets of admission. I believe that the Haymarket was the only theatre in which the custom

existed. Under Mr. Buckstone's conservative management, very old fashions lingered on long after they had been abolished at other theatres. I can remember the time (about thirty-eight years since, I think) when it was still lighted by wax candles. The manager of the Haymarket, in Court dress, and carrying two wax candles, ushered Royalty into its box long after other managers had left this function to their deputy, and the old practice of announcing that a new play 'would be repeated every night until further notice' survived until the very close of Mr. Buckstone's management.

"*Pygmalion and Galatea* followed *The Palace of Truth*, and achieved a remarkable success, owing mainly to Mrs. Kendal's admirable impersonation of Galatea. Mr. Buckstone, Mr. Howe, Miss Caroline Hill, and Mrs. Chippendale were the other noteworthy members of the cast. This was followed by *The Wicked World*, a fairy comedy in three acts, and *Charity*, a modern comedy in four acts, which achieved but an indifferent success in London, although it was played with much credit in the country, under Mr. Wilson Barrett's management."

*The Princess* was produced on January 8, 1870; *The Palace of Truth* on November 19, 1870; *Pygmalion and Galatea* on December 9, 1871; *The Wicked World* on January 4, 1873. *Pygmalion and Galatea* has, of course, often been revived, notably by Miss Mary Anderson in 1884 and in 1888, and as a contrast to the £30 which he received for his first play, it is interesting to note that Gilbert received some £40,000 in fees for *Pygmalion and Galatea*.

The quality of the dialogue in *The Princess* may be estimated by the following lines:

"For, adder-like, his sting lay in his tongue!  
His bitter insolence still rankles here,  
Although a score of years have come and gone!  
His outer man, gnarled, knotted as it was,  
Seemed to his cruel and cynical within,  
Hyperion to a Saturday Review!"

There is a definite suggestion of the Gilbert of the Savoy operas in one of the incidental songs:

"Load her with frippery,  
Glovery, slippery,  
Cleverly planned, not going too far!  
Marabout feather,  
Gossamer airy,  
Fastened together,  
Give to your fairy."

The plot of *The Palace of Truth* is familiar. It finishes with a series of rhymed couplets :

PALMIS. You've learnt to doubt the love that those profess,  
Who by such love gain temporal success.

(*Looking angrily at CHRYSAL.*)

ZORAM. That surly misanthropes, with venom tainted,

ARISTÆUS. Are often not as black as they are painted !

AZEMA. To doubt all maids who of their virtue boast :  
That they're the worst who moralize the most !

(*Looking at MIRZA.*)

MIRZA. That blushes, though they're most becoming, yet  
Proclaim, too oft, the commonplace coquette !

(*Looking at AZEMA.*)

I can declare, with pardonable pride,  
I never blush !

AZEMA. You couldn't if you tried !

PHILAMIR. Under the influence that lately reigned  
Within these walls I breathed my love unfeigned ;  
Now that the power no longer reigns above,  
I ratify the accents of my love.  
Forgive me, Zeloide, my life, my bride !

ZELOIDE (*very demurely*). I love you, Philamir—be satisfied !

*Pygmalion and Galatea* is a romantic comedy in blank verse. Its stage-craft is admirable, and it is easy to understand the attraction that the part of Galatea has had for beautiful actresses.

Perhaps the most felicitous lines are those in which Galatea describes her gradual awakening to life :

“ I was a cold dull stone ! I recollect  
That by some means I knew that I was stone :  
That was the first dull gleam of consciousness ;  
I became conscious of a chilly self,  
A cold immovable identity,  
I knew that I was stone, and knew no more !  
Then, by an imperceptible advance,  
Came the dim evidence of outer things,  
Seen—darkly and imperfectly—yet seen—  
The walls surrounding me, and I, alone,  
That pedestal—that curtain—then a voice  
That called on Galatea ! At that word,

Which seemed to shake my marble to the core,  
That which was dim before, came evident,  
Sounds, that had hummed around me, indistinct,  
Vague, meaningless—seemed to resolve themselves  
Into a language I could understand ;  
I felt my frame pervaded by a glow  
That seemed to thaw my marble into flesh :  
Its cold hard substance throbbed with active life,  
My limbs grew supple, and I moved—I lived !  
Lived in the ecstasy of new-born life !  
Lived in the love of him that fashioned me !  
Lived in a thousand tangled thoughts of hope.”

On January 25, 1871, the Court Theatre in Sloane Square was opened by Miss Marie Lytton with a comedy by Gilbert called *Randall's Thumb*. This was followed by his *Creatures of Impulse* on April 15, 1871 ; by a dramatization of *Great Expectations* on May 28, 1871 ; by *On Guard* on October 28, 1871 ; and by *The Wedding March* on November 15, 1873. Writing of his version of *Great Expectations*, Gilbert said :

“ It afforded, however, a curious example of the manner in which the Censorship of those days dealt with plays submitted to it for licence. It seems that it was the custom of the then Licencer of Plays to look through the MS. of a new piece, and strike out all irreverent words, substituting for them words of an inoffensive character. In *Great Expectations*, Magwitch, the returned convict, had to say to Pip : ‘ Here you are, in chambers fit for a Lord.’ The MS. was returned to the theatre with the word ‘ Lord ’ struck out, and ‘ Heaven ’ substituted, in pencil ! ”

In the spring of 1873, Miss Lytton produced *The Happy Land*, a burlesque version of Gilbert's *Wicked World*, which Gilbert himself sketched out and Gilbert à Beckett completed. On January 3, 1874, *Charity* was produced at the Haymarket Theatre, the cast including Mr. and Mrs. Kendal. Gilbert took immense pains with this comedy. The one notebook that he left behind him contains scenes of the play written, rewritten, and transposed with evident determination to attack a social problem impressively and, in a manner, to compel respectful attention. *Charity* is a problem play, the story of a woman who redeemed the mistake of her life by a career

of self-sacrifice. It says something for Gilbert's courage that he should have attacked the hard judgments of conventional Victorian morality, even though his play finishes with a conventional sentimental ending. Times have changed, but it was certainly true in the respectable England of the seventies that there was one sin, and one sin only, "for which on earth there is no atonement." Gilbert preaches in *Charity*, deliberately preaches, for the jester, with whom all the world still laughs, was moved to the depth of his soul by cruelty either in individuals or institutions, and yearned, almost pathetically, to use his art to destroy the thing that he hated.

*Sweethearts*, a sentimental comedy in two acts, was produced at the Prince of Wales's Theatre in 1874, the principal character being played by Mrs. Bancroft. It was followed at the same theatre by *Tom Cobb*. *Broken Hearts* was produced at the Court Theatre on December 17, 1875, the cast including Mr. and Mrs. Kendal. Years after, Gilbert told Miss Anderson there was "more of me" in *Broken Hearts* than anywhere else, a confession that the humorist, whose wit was often so brilliantly hard, was at heart a sentimentalist. *Broken Hearts* is a fanciful fairy-story, set on an island where four broken-hearted maidens live together guarded by a deformed dwarf:

"We maidens all (save one) have dearly loved  
And those we loved have died. We, broken hearts,  
Knit by the sympathy of kindred woe,  
Have sought this isle far from the ken of man;  
And having loved, and having lost our loves,  
Stand pledged to love no living thing again."

The man, young and handsome, arrives on the island and two of the maidens, two sisters, fall in love with him. The elder is strong and resolute, the younger weak and ailing, and after a rivalry in unselfishness, the younger sister dies.

*Broken Hearts* was very near to Gilbert's heart, and he resented the failure to appreciate it. F. C. Burnand, who was undoubtedly jealous of Gilbert, wrote to Clement Scott: "I'm off to see Gilbert's 'Broken Parts.'" Scott foolishly

repeated the remark, and Gilbert wrote him the following letter : "Burnand's attempt at wit is silly and coarse, and your attempt to bring it into prominence is in the worst possible taste. I am not by any means a thin-skinned man, but in this case I feel bound to take exception to your treatment of me and of my serious work."

*Dan'l Druce* was produced at the Haymarket Theatre on September 11, 1876; and *Engaged* at the same theatre on October 3, 1877, Miss Marion Terry playing the leading part. *Engaged* is a humorous farce with a definite suggestion of the "topsy-turvydom" of the Gilbert of the *Bab Ballads* and the operas, and it has a proper place in the story of Gilbert's considerable achievements. It was produced in the same year as *The Sorcerer*. The first act takes place in a Scottish cottage, near Gretna, and it opens with the courting of Maggie Macfarlane by Angus Macalister. Angus explains to his future mother-in-law :

"I'm a fairly prosperous man. What wi' farmin' a bit land and gillieing odd times, and a bit o' poachin' now and again; and what wi' my illicit whusky still—and throwin' trains off the line, that the poor distracted passengers may come to my cot, I've mair ways than one of making an honest living—and I'll work them a' nicht and day for my bonnie Meg!"

A train is wrecked, the distracted passengers arrive, and the fun begins, the dramatist burlesquing romantic drama with a gusto that Mr. Shaw might well envy. The dialogue is excellent. For example :

MINNIE. Mr. Belvawny, I don't know what we should have done without you. What with your sweet songs, your amusing riddles, and your clever conjuring tricks, the weary days of waiting have passed like a delightful dream.

MISS TREHERENE. It is impossible to be dull in the society of one who can charm the soul with plaintive ballads one moment and the next roll a rabbit and a guinea-pig into one.

The conclusion is pure Gilbertian. The heroine speaks :

"Belvawny, I love you with an intensity of devotion that I firmly believe will last while I live. But dear Cheviot is my husband now ;

he has a claim upon me which it would be impossible—nay, criminal—to resist. Farewell, Belvawny; Minnie may yet be yours. Cheviot—my husband—my own love—if the devotion of a lifetime can atone for the misery of the last few days, it is yours, with every wifely sentiment of pride, gratitude, admiration, and love.”

*Gretchen*, a blank-verse version of the Faust story with Mephistopheles left out, was produced at the Olympic Theatre on March 24, 1879. It was not a success, and Gilbert once said: “I called it *Gretchen*, the public called it rot.” The play is not without dignity. The following lines are part of *Gretchen*’s last speech:

“Ah me! but it is meet that I should die,  
For I can turn my head but not my heart—  
And I can close my eyes, but not my heart—  
And still my foolish tongue, but not my heart—  
So, Faustus, it is meet that I should die.”

Gilbert’s other earlier dramatic work included various adaptations from the French which no Victorian dramatist ever succeeded in avoiding—*Foggerty’s Fairy*, a fairy comedy founded on a story written many years before, which was produced at the Criterion in December, 1881; *Comedy and Tragedy*, which Mary Anderson produced at the Lyceum in 1884; *Brantingham Hall*, produced at the St. James’s Theatre in 1888, with a cast that included Louis Waller, Rutland Barrington, Norman Forbes, Mrs. Gaston Murray, Miss Julia Neilson, and Miss Rose Norreys; and *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern*, a burlesque of *Hamlet*, produced at the Vaudeville Theatre in June, 1891.

When he was knighted, Gilbert confessed that he was the author of over seventy plays. He was an industrious and prolific writer, and he is almost unique among writers of genius from the fact that his fame rests on a comparatively small number of masterpieces, while a great part of his work is almost forgotten.

In *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern*, Gilbert returns to the blank verse into which, like another Silas Wegg, he had a

constant desire to drop. It is an amusing piece of fooling, and in one of Ophelia's speeches there is an admirable burlesque summary of the never-ending discussions concerning the sanity of Hamlet:

"Opinion is divided. Some men hold  
That he's the sanest far of all sane men—  
Some that he's really sane, but shamming mad—  
Some that he's really mad, but shamming sane—  
Some that he will be mad, some that he was—  
Some that he couldn't be. But on the whole  
(As far as I can make out what they mean)  
The favourite theory's somewhat like this:  
Hamlet is idiotically sane  
With lucid intervals of lunacy."

*Brantingham Hall*, produced by Rutland Barrington at the St. James's Theatre on November 27, 1888, is a melodrama that begins in the Australian bush and finishes in England, but it is melodrama with many Gilbertian touches. The speech of the clergyman in the first act is an echo of the vicar's song in *The Sorcerer*:

"I'm desperately impressionable, and with half the women of my parish setting their caps at me, I wasn't safe. They never left me. Presents showered down upon me. It literally rained carriage-rugs, altar-cloths, birthday-books, paper-knives, letter-weights, pocket-diaries, knitted waistcoats, and presentation inkstands. I was the repository of all their confidences. I had to devote two hours every day to deciding cases of female conscience of the most complicated and delicate description. My photographs were bought up as fast as they could be printed! Half-a-dozen ladies of exalted station were carried out in convulsions whenever I preached. The situation became serious; it was more than a highly susceptible clergyman ought to be called upon to bear. To make a long story short, there was nothing for it but flight. So, one night, one dark November night, I fled! I sailed at once for Sydney, and here I am, a hard-working bush missionary with thirty or forty miles to ride every day—a fine field of usefulness before me and—except for your wife, whom I am much obliged to you for having married—nothing in the shape of a handsome woman within a week's march. I weathered 'em, sir; I weathered 'em. It was a hard fight, but, by Jove, I won it, sir. By Jove, I won it."

The last act is sometimes very human, as when "an infernal rascal" does "an uncommonly fine thing." Infernal rascals



are always doing uncommonly fine things in the real world, which is one of the phenomena that make life thrilling and bewildering. But they are rarely permitted to do fine things on the stage. And in this last act, too, Gilbert is sometimes the real Gilbert, as when the country gentleman says :

“ Anticipating this interview, I have taken the precaution, as a magistrate, to bind myself over to keep the peace towards all Her Majesty’s subjects for the space of three calendar months.”

*Comedy and Tragedy* is an effective one-act play. It is curious to note that Gilbert wrote best when he did not write at any length. The libretti of the operas are all very short. The short *Comedy and Tragedy* is superior to many of his comedies, and *The Hooligan*, the best of his dramas, is in one act.

Gilbert once declared that no man creates anything worthy of himself until the age of forty. History, certainly, does not justify this statement, but it is, to a large extent, true of his own career. *Trial by Jury*, the first of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas, was produced when Gilbert was thirty-nine, and *The Sorcerer* when he was forty-one. It should, however, be remembered that several of the plays with which we are concerned in this chapter were written after the dramatist had begun to explore—we quote one of his early American critics—“ a mine rare, indeed, in quality.”

To the end of his days Gilbert rebelled against confinement to one form of dramatic work, even though that work was supremely his own. With his libretti, as Mr. William Archer has said, “ he restored the literary self-respect of the English stage.” But he was not content with that ; he was ever anxious to attempt other forms of dramatic writing. We have already suggested the essential quality of Gilbert’s genius. The Gilbert of the early *Bab Ballads* is, almost without change in idea or development in craftsmanship, the Gilbert of the last libretti. Similarly his interests, notably the law, remained the same all through his life, and his early enthusiasms never left him.

Robertson was in some respects his master. From him, he himself said, he had learned the art of stage-management. Gilbert told Mr. William Archer :

" Robertson was an exceedingly skilful dramatic tailor. He knew the stage perfectly, and he knew perfectly the company he had to write for—the then Prince of Wales's stock company, which varied very little. He fitted each character with the utmost nicety to the man or woman who was to play in it ; and he was there to instruct them in every movement, every emphasis. But when these parts are transferred to other actors who knew not Robertson, the very nicety of their adjustment to their original performers is apt to render them misfits. I think that accounts in great measure for the comparative ineffectiveness of his plays in revival—their charm was so largely dependent on Robertson's personal inspiration. . . .

" He invented stage-management. It was an unknown art before his time. Formerly, in a conversation scene, for instance, you simply brought down two or three chairs from the flat and placed them in a row in the middle of the stage, and the people sat down and talked, and when the conversation was ended the chairs were replaced. Robertson showed how to give life and variety and nature to the scene by breaking it up with all sorts of little incidents and delicate by-play. I have been at many of his rehearsals and learnt a great deal from them."

Like master, like pupil. The American writer whom we have already quoted said of Gilbert in the early eighties :

" Always his own stage manager, he never permits his plays to be brought out in London without prolonged rehearsals, at which he goes through every part and arranges every bit of ' business.' He also frequently sketches the scenery and models the ' properties,' and if it is necessary to instruct the ballet, he is still in his element, being an adept even in the harlequin art."

But it was not only in his stagecraft that Gilbert resembled Robertson. Both men were sentimentalists, and of the two Gilbert was probably the more whole-hearted. He wanted to beat Robertson at his own game. He yearned to give sentimental comedy greater distinction and a fuller artistic life.

Success often brings tragedy with it. Gilbert was the master of literary paradox, and he himself was a paradox. He was the most successful writer of comic opera libretti and of

humorous verse that English literature has ever known. His work brought him wealth and immense popularity. He was quoted fifty times more frequently than half the poets dead and all the poets living. He found libretti vulgar doggerel, and left it a fine art, and it might have been supposed that consciousness of artistic achievement as well as material returns would have made him a happy man. But he was never quite happy, never really content. Success was his in no half-measure, but it was not all the success for which he yearned. He wore the cap and bells of the jester with the fine air of an artist, but he never loved the cap and the bells. Gilbert is an example of the truth of Jane Austen's words : " We all love to instruct." The Gilbert of the airy lyric and magical irresistible foolery was obsessed by the importance of being earnest. He wanted to preach.

In the writing of genuine biography, in the endeavour to present a great man as he really was, splendid qualities are made the more evident by the recognition of limitations. No one with the smallest critical faculty can read the Gilbert comedies and find in them more than a suggestion of the genius that riots in the *Bab Ballads* and in the Gilbert and Sullivan libretti. The strangest and most ironic of Gilbertian paradoxes is that he never could realize that his serious plays were not equal to his magnificent excursions into the Land of Topsy-Turvydom, the Country of the Happy Impossible.

Successful men always resent failures. They naturally seem to them unnatural. Similarly, men whose work has been universally praised naturally regard anything like severe criticism as impertinence. Gilbert was frankly unable to understand the want of appreciation that his serious work received, at any rate after the eighties, and his lack of the power of self-criticism, a quality that only very few artists have ever possessed, led him to suppose that critics were leagued against him, and that there was a conspiracy to prevent him from leaving the world which he had made all his

own for a world which he would always have to share with others.

Gilbert created his own world. When he had made it, he sometimes tired of it and longed for other worlds. But his own world held him fast. To quote Mr. Archer :

“ Gilbert could never quite escape from that Palace of Truth which was the scene of his first serious play—a domain of magical psycho-analysis where some occult influence forced every one to utter his secret thoughts and reveal his inmost motives.”

Mr. H. M. Walbrook says that there is a “ remoteness from life ” in all Gilbert’s work. His characters, Mr. Walbrook says, are detached from humanity, “ creations of his own, whimsical, preposterous, remote.” To prove his point, Mr. Walbrook emphasizes the fact that in the operas Gilbert will often begin a verse with apparent sincerity and end it with a Gilbertian absurdity. The fact was that he realized that he was a sentimentalist, and for purposes of the operas he was obliged to keep himself in hand. It was this self-discipline, this shackling of the sentimentalist by the humorist, that made Gilbert a great artist, but he hated the discipline. The same thing is true of Dickens. When the sentimentalist riots in the Dickens novels, we get preposterous characters like Madeleine Bray, Little Em’ly, Little Nell, and Agnes. It is only when Dickens creates characters of his own, “ whimsical, preposterous, remote,” that his genius is triumphant.

The sentimentalist in Gilbert did not submit to the humorist without a struggle. He said, and he believed, that the real Gilbert was the Gilbert of *Broken Hearts*, and not the Gilbert of *The Mikado*. Similarly, Dickens probably was prouder of Little Nell than of Mrs. Gamp.

## CHAPTER V

### GILBERT AND SULLIVAN

GILBERT first met Sullivan in the autumn of 1870, at the old Gallery of Illustration in Lower Regent Street, where the German Reeds then gave their entertainments. They were introduced by Frederick Clay, who had composed the music for several operettas that Gilbert had written for the German Reeds. The first time the two names appeared together was on the published score of one of the German Reed operettas, of which Gilbert had written the "book," which Clay dedicated to Sullivan. Gilbert was thirty-five when he met Sullivan, and Sullivan twenty-nine. They were both already well-known men. Gilbert was one of the most popular of contemporary dramatists, and Sullivan had already arrived as a composer, notably with his incidental music for *The Tempest*. He had also composed musical settings for two operettas. The first result of the meeting was the production at the Gaiety Theatre, on December 23, 1871, of *Thespis*, or, *The Gods Grown Old*, an "entirely original, grotesque opera in two acts." *Thespis* was produced as an after-piece to H. G. Byron's *Dearer than Love*, and it lasted for an hour and a half. The following was the cast :

#### GODS

JUPITER	} Aged Deities . . . . .	{	Mr. John Maclean
APOLLO			Mr. F. Sullivan
MARS			Mr. Wood
DIANA			Mrs. H. Leigh
MERCURY			Miss E. Farren



GILBERT IN THE EARLY SULLIVAN DAYS



## THESPIANS

THESPIS . . . . .	<i>Mr. J. L. Toole</i>
SILLIMON . . . . .	<i>Mr. J. G. Taylor</i>
TIMIDON . . . . .	<i>Mr. Marshall</i>
TIPSICON . . . . .	<i>Mr. Robert Soutar</i>
PREPOSTEROUS . . . . .	<i>Mr. H. Payne</i>
STUPIDAS . . . . .	<i>Mr. F. Payne</i>
SPARKEION . . . . .	<i>Mlle. Clary</i>
NICEMIS . . . . .	<i>Miss Constance Loseby</i>
PRETTEIA . . . . .	<i>Miss Berend</i>
DAPHNE . . . . .	<i>Miss Annie Tremaine</i>
CYMON . . . . .	<i>Miss L. Wilson</i>

The Gaiety Theatre was then under the management of John Hollingshead, who boasted that he kept alight "the sacred lamp of burlesque." There can be no question that Gilbert's fine taste had already revolted against the formless amusements which burlesqued nothing, and the success of which depended on the ability of such clever actors as Nellie Farren, J. L. Toole, and Edward Terry, and the presence on the stage of large numbers of shapely ladies in tights. *Thespis* was not a success. He was eager to evolve a more attractive form of musical entertainment. The public that asked for the gritty bread of burlesque regarded Gilbert's humour as a stone. In his *Gaiety Chronicles*, John Hollingshead declares that the piece had defects, the defects, of course, being its unlikeness to the ordinary Gaiety productions. But the "book" of *Thespis* is genuine Gilbert, the Gilbert whom nowadays all the world loves. A party of actors appear on the summit of Mount Olympus for a picnic. There they meet the gods, all of whom except Mercury are old and out-of-date. Thespis, the leader of the troupe, suggests that the gods shall go down to earth, leaving the direction of affairs to the players. Both gods and players fare badly, and the piece finishes with their return to their proper rôles. *Thespis* once more emphasizes the fact that Gilbert's artistry was hardly affected with the passing of the years. Many of its songs might well have appeared in the later operas. For example, Mercury sings :



- “ Oh, I’m the celestial drudge,  
 From morning to night I must stop at it,  
 On errands all day I must trudge,  
 And I stick to my work till I drop at it !  
 In summer I get up at one  
 (As a good-natured donkey I’m ranked for it),  
 Then I go and I light up the Sun,  
 And Phœbus Apollo gets thanked for it !  
 Well, well, it’s the way of the world,  
 And will be through all its futurity,  
 Though noodles are baroned and earled,  
 There’s nothing for clever obscurity !
- “ I’m the slave of the gods, neck and heels,  
 And I’m bound to obey, though I rate at ’em,  
 And I not only order their meals,  
 But I cook ’em, and serve ’em and wait at ’em.  
 Then I make all their nectar—I do—  
 (Which a terrible liquor to rack us is)  
 And whenever I mix them a brew,  
 Why all the thanksgivings are Bacchus’s !  
 Well, well, it’s the way of the world, etc.
- “ Then reading and writing I teach,  
 And spelling-books, many I’ve edited !  
 And for bringing those arts within reach,  
 That donkey Minerva gets credited.  
 Then I scrape at the stars with a knife  
 And plate-powder the moon (on the days for it),  
 And I hear all the world and his wife  
 Awarding Diana the praise for it !  
 Well, well, it’s the way of the world, etc.”

The counterpart of this song is in *The Gondoliers*. There is genuine charm in the chorus sung by the actors when they arrive at the mountain top :

- “ Climbing over rocky mountain,  
 Skipping rivulet and fountain,  
 Passing where the willows quiver,  
 By the ever-rolling river,  
 Swollen with the summer rain.
- “ Threading long and leafy mazes,  
 Dotted with unnumbered daisies,  
 Scaling rough and ragged passes,  
 Climb the hardy lads and lasses,  
 Till the mountain top they gain.

“ Fill the cup and tread the measure,  
Make the most of fleeting leisure,  
Hail it as a true ally,  
Though it perish bye and bye !  
Every moment brings a treasure  
Of its own especial pleasure,  
Though the moments quickly die,  
Greet them gaily as they fly ! ”

And there is the real brand of Gilbertian topsy-turvydom in the description of the chairman of a railway company :

“ I once knew a chap who discharged a function,  
On the North South East West Diddlesex Junction.  
He was conspicuous exceeding,  
For his affable ways and his easy breeding.  
Although a Chairman of Directors,  
He was hand in glove with the ticket inspectors.  
He tipped the guards with brand-new fivers,  
And sang little songs to the engine-drivers.  
'Twas told to me with great compunction,  
By one who had discharged with unction  
A Chairman of Directors' function,  
On the North South East West Diddlesex Junction,  
Fol diddle, lol diddle, lol lol lay,

“ Each Christmas Day he gave each stoker,  
A silver shovel and a golden poker.  
He'd buttonhole flowers for the ticket sorters,  
And rich Bath-buns for the outside porters,  
He'd mount the clerks on his first-class hunters,  
And he built little villas for the road-side shunters.  
And if any were fond of pigeon shooting,  
He'd ask them down to his place at Tooting.”

*Thespis* also includes a typically dainty Gilbertian love-song worthy to be compared to the best that he ever wrote. Over three years passed before the second Gilbert and Sullivan production. On March 23, 1875, *Trial by Jury* was produced at the Royalty Theatre, then under the management of Miss Selina Dolaro. It was described as a “Dramatic Cantata,” and it was acted as an after-piece to Offenbach's *La Péricholo*. The original scene was copied from the Clerkenwell Sessions House, where Gilbert had himself practised. The following was the cast :

THE LEARNED JUDGE . . . . .	<i>Mr. F. Sullivan</i>
THE PLAINTIFF . . . . .	<i>Miss Nellie Bromley</i>
THE DEFENDANT . . . . .	<i>Mr. Walter Fisher</i>
THE COUNSEL FOR THE PLAINTIFF . . . . .	<i>Mr. Hollingsworth</i>
USHER . . . . .	<i>Mr. Pepper</i>
FOREMAN OF THE JURY . . . . .	<i>Mr. W. S. Penley</i>

Mr. W. S. Penley made his first appearance on the stage in this production. The germ of the idea of *Trial by Jury* may be found in Gilbert's story, *An Elixir of Love*, in which, at the end, the Bishop marries the young lady as the Judge marries the plaintiff in the play.

"Put your briefs upon the shelf,  
I will marry her myself."

The story of *Trial by Jury* is too familiar for repetition, and it contains "When I went to the Bar as a very young man," perhaps the best-known comic song in the English language. It has been suggested that Gilbert had "*Bardell v. Pickwick*" in mind when he wrote *Trial by Jury*, and there is certainly a suggestion of Serjeant Buzfuz in the plaintiff's counsel's opening:

"With a sense of deep emotion,  
I approached this painful case;  
For I never had a notion  
That a man could be so base,  
Or deceive a girl confiding,  
Vows etcetera deriding.

"See my interesting client,  
Victim of a heartless wile!  
See the traitor, all defiant,  
Wears a supercilious smile!"

The Gilbert gem in *Trial by Jury*, a song in its form and its idea again to be matched in many of the later operas, is the defendant's address to the jury:

"Oh, gentlemen, listen, I pray,  
Though I own that my heart has been ranging,  
Of nature the laws I obey;  
For nature is constantly changing.

The moon in her phases is found,  
The time and the wind and the weather,  
The months in succession go round,  
And you don't find two Mondays together.  
Consider the moral, I pray,  
Nor bring a young fellow to sorrow  
Who loves this young lady to-day  
And loves that young lady to-morrow.

" You cannot eat breakfast all day,  
Nor is it the act of a sinner.  
When breakfast is taken away,  
To turn your attention to dinner.  
And it's not in the range of belief  
That you could hold him as a glutton  
Who, when he is tired of beef,  
Determines to tackle the mutton.

" But this I am ready to say,  
If it will appease their sorrow,  
I'll marry one lady to-day,  
And I'll marry the other to-morrow."

Fred. Sullivan, who played the Judge, was a brother of Arthur Sullivan, and Gilbert said : " The surprising success of *Trial by Jury* was due in no slight degree to poor Fred. Sullivan's admirable performance." *Trial by Jury* is the only Gilbert and Sullivan opera in which there is no spoken dialogue. In this famous musical cantata, the Gilbert chorus made its first appearance. The chorus in the old-time burlesques and in the adaptations of French opéra bouffe had nothing to do with the case, but Gilbert's chorus was always an integral part of the cast.

In *Trial by Jury* the chorus consists of the bridesmaids and the jurymen. In *Pinafore* they are the sisters, cousins, and aunts of the First Lords, in *Iolanthe* they are the members of the House of Lords, and in *Ruddigore* the hero's ancestors. This dramatic use of a chorus that had hitherto been employed merely for noise or ornament, had no small part in making the Gilbert and Sullivan operas genuine artistic creations. Ralph Rackstraw says in *Pinafore*, " I know the value of a

kindly chorus," and in nothing does Gilbert more resemble Aristophanes than in the use he makes of his choruses.

Selina Dolaro's manager at the Royalty Theatre was Mr. D'Oyly Carte, and it was obviously to his conviction that Gilbert and Sullivan could be used to greater advantage than to provide after-pieces that the great Savoy series came to be written and produced. Gilbert says in the fragment of autobiography :

"The success of *Trial by Jury* induced Mr. D'Oyly Carte, at that time managing director of the newly formed Comedy Opera Company, to commission us to write a two-act opera for the Opera Company."

In fact, the Comedy Opera Company was formed and the Opera-Comique taken in order to exploit Gilbert and Sullivan. Mrs. D'Oyly Carte says in a letter :

"The Comedy Opera Company was entirely Mr. Carte's idea and his own creation. He was manager of the Royalty Theatre at the time of the original production of *Trial by Jury*, and after that piece he always had the idea of getting Mr. Gilbert and Sir Arthur Sullivan to write a larger work together ; but it was a long time before he could get this arranged and before they were both ready and able to undertake it. And then the theatre had to be found and the money got together to start."

The Comedy Opera Company came to an end after the production of *Pinafore*. There is not a little historic interest in the genesis of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas, the one English contribution of any value to dramatic literature for many generations. All history is peppered with errors, and theatrical history more than any other. In most records, for example, *Trial by Jury* is said to be the first of the Gilbert and Sullivan works, and *Thespis* is ignored. There seems, however, to us no sort of doubt that the idea of producing a Gilbert and Sullivan opera which should fill the whole evening bill was D'Oyly Carte's, and we see no reason to doubt that Mr. Rupert Carte is absolutely accurate in his statement :

"In 1876 my father took a lease of the Opéra-Comique Theatre, and on his sole initiative formed the Comedy Opera Company, of which

he was himself the manager, for the purpose of producing operas by Gilbert and Sullivan."

In 1876, however, Mr. Carte was not in a position to produce plays at his own expense. He had to find what are known in theatrical jargon as "backers," and he, naturally, went first to the firm of music publishers who had published *Trial by Jury*. The Comedy Opera Company, in addition to Mr. Carte, consisted of four men—Frank Chappell, George Metzler, both members of families connected with music publishing; John Collard (one of the pianoforte Collards), and Mr. Bailey-Generalli, generally known as "Water-cart" Bailey, from the fact that he owned nearly all the water-carts then sprinkling the London streets.

After the production of *Pinafore*, trouble arose between the syndicate and Mr. Carte, and there were law proceedings, which ended in the break-up of the partnership. Miss Marian Chappell, Frank Chappell's sister, tells us:

"It was absolutely against my brother's wish that law proceedings were taken, and though I think his partner was rather against them too, the other members of the syndicate, who were merely business men with no artistic leanings, insisted on going to law, and my brother's opinion was overborne."

Mr. Chappell and his friends reaped little of the abundant financial harvest that resulted from the partnership they had helped to start, but their names are certainly worthy of honourable mention in the record of Gilbert's achievements. It was a real service to humanity to help to launch the Gilbert and Sullivan ship.

*The Sorcerer*, the first Gilbert and Sullivan opera to be produced in connection with Mr. D'Oyly Carte, was first played at the Opéra-Comique Theatre on November 17, 1877, two and a half years after the production of *Trial by Jury* at the Royalty, with the following cast:

SIR MARMADUKE POINTDEXTRE (an elderly baronet) . . . . .	<i>Mr. Richard Temple</i>
ALEXIS (of the Grenadier Guards—his son)	<i>Mr. George Bentham</i>
DR. DALY (Vicar of Ploverleigh) . . . .	<i>Mr. Rutland Barrington</i>
NOTARY . . . . .	<i>Mr. F. Clifton</i>
JOHN WELLINGTON WELLS (of J. W. Wells and Co., Family Sorcerers) . . . .	<i>Mr. George Grossmith</i>
LADY SANGAZURE (a lady of ancient lineage) . . . . .	<i>Mrs. Howard Paul</i>
ALINE (her daughter—betrothed to Alexis)	<i>Miss Alice May</i>
MRS. PARTLET (a pew-opener) . . . .	<i>Miss Everard</i>
CONSTANCE (her daughter) . . . . .	<i>Miss Giulia Warwick</i>

*The Sorcerer* introduced George Grossmith and Rutland Barrington to the professional stage. Mr. Grossmith was the father of the present well-known actor. Before his appearance in Gilbert and Sullivan operas he was a police-court reporter in the daytime and an entertainer in the evenings, thus following the example of his father, generally known as George Grossmith the First. He began his stage career with considerable trepidation. When he was going over the part of John Wellington Wells with Gilbert, he said: "For the part of a magician, surely you require a fine man with a large voice?" "That," replied Gilbert, "is exactly what we don't want."

To a large extent, *The Sorcerer* is a dramatic adaptation of Gilbert's story, *The Elixir of Love*, in which, as we have suggested, can also be found the germ of *Trial by Jury*. The idea of the story is the idea of the play, and some of the dialogue is taken almost word for word from the earlier work. In *The Sorcerer* we are introduced to "the firm of J. W. Wells and Co., the old-established sorcerers in S. Mary Axe." In *The Elixir of Love* we are told: "In S. Martin's Lane lived Baylis and Culpepper, magicians, astrologers, and professors of the Black Art. Baylis had sold himself to the Devil at a very early age, and had become remarkably proficient in all kinds of enchantment. Culpepper had been his apprentice, and having also acquired considerable skill as a necromancer, was taken into partnership by the genial old magician, who from the first

had taken a liking to the frank and fair-haired boy. Ten years ago the firm of Baylis and Culpepper stood at the very head of the London family magicians." In *The Elixir of Love* the Rev. Stanley Gay bought a nine-gallon cask of love-philtre from Messrs. Baylis and Culpepper. In *The Sorcerer*, Mr. Wells tells Alexis that he sells his patent Oxy-Hydrogen Love-at-first-sight Philtre "in four-and-a-half and nine gallon casks." And there are many other resemblances between the play and the story. Gilbert had also used the love-philtre idea in one of the *Bab Ballads*—*The Cunning Woman*, in which the virtuous Jane, in order to protect herself from the wicked Lord de Jacob Pillaloo, went to "a sorceressing dame" to buy a mystic liquor which would make her hideous in the eye of her would-be seducer, with the most gratifying result :

"The Lord he gazed at Jenny's eyes,  
He looked her through and through;  
The cunning woman's prophecies  
Were clearly coming true.  
Lord Pillaloo, the Rustic's Bane,  
(Bad person he and proud)  
He laughed ha, ha! at pretty Jane  
And sneered at her aloud.  
He bade her get behind him then,  
And seek her mother's styne—  
Yet to her native countrymen  
She was as fair as aye."

*The Sorcerer* has rather a thin plot and is really nothing more than a hotch-potch of humorous ideas strung around John Wellington Wells and his love-philtres. It contains many admirable Gilbertian lyrics, the best known of which, perhaps, is the vicar's song, which Gilbert afterwards christened *Eheu fugaces !* :

"Time was when maidens of the noblest station,  
Forsaking even military men,  
Would gaze upon me, wrapped in adoration,  
Ah me! I was a pale young curate then."

Though, as we have insisted, one of Gilbert's unusual qualities, as a humorous writer, was that he began to write



as a finished artist, and in the course of a long career retained his mood and hardly bettered his skill, there are naturally some exceptions to a general truth. The patter song in *The Sorcerer*, which begins "Oh! my name is John Wellington Wells," is ingenious in its rhyming, but a little thin and scrappy:

" Oh! he can prophesy  
With a wink of his eye,  
Peep with security  
Into futurity,  
Sum up your history,  
Clear up a mystery,  
Humour proclivity  
For a nativity—for a nativity.

" Mirrors so magical,  
Tetrapods tragical,  
Bogies spectacular,  
Answers oracular,  
Facts astronomical,  
Solemn or comical,  
And, if you want it, he  
Makes a reduction on taking a quantity!"

Compare this with the extraordinary sure-handed ingenuity of the patter song in *Patience*, written four years afterwards:

" If you want a receipt for that popular mystery,  
Known to the world as a Heavy Dragoon,  
Take all the remarkable people in history,  
Rattle them off to a popular tune.  
The pluck of Lord Nelson on board of the *Victory*—  
Genius of Bismarck devising a plan;  
The humour of Fielding (which sounds contradictory)—  
Coolness of Paget about to trepan—  
The science of Jullien, the eminent musico—  
Wit of Macaulay, who wrote of Queen Anne—  
The pathos of Paddy, as rendered by Boucicault—  
Style of the Bishop of Sodor and Man—  
The dash of a D'Orsay, divested of quackery—  
Narrative powers of Dickens and Thackeray—  
Victor Emmanuel—peak-hunting Peverill—  
Thomas Aquinas, and Doctor Sacheverell—  
Tupper and Tennyson—Daniel Defoe—  
Anthony Trollope and Mr. Guizot!

Take of these elements all that is fusible,  
Melt them all down in a pipkin or crucible,  
Set them to simmer and take off the scum,  
And a Heavy Dragoon is the residuum ! ”

Here there is very evident progression.

*The Sorcerer* ran for six months, and was followed by *H.M.S. Pinafore*; or, *The Lass that Loved a Sailor*, produced at the Opéra-Comique on Saturday, May 28, 1878, which ran for two years, and completely established Gilbert and Sullivan opera as a popular form of entertainment.

Gilbert frequently complained that he had been consistently unfairly treated by the professional critics, and it is rather amusing nowadays to read the many futile criticisms written of *H.M.S. Pinafore* forty-five years ago. It was said that “in the story itself there is not much of humour to balance its studied absurdity,” and it was described as “a frothy production, destined soon to subside into nothingness.” The following is the original cast :

THE RT. HON. SIR JOSEPH PORTER, K.C.B. (First Lord of the Admiralty) . . .	Mr. George Grossmith
CAPT. CORCORAN (commanding <i>H.M.S. Pinafore</i> ) . . . . .	Mr. Rutland Barrington
RALPH RACKSTRAW (Able Seaman) . . .	Mr. George Power
DICK DEADEYE (Able Seaman) . . . .	Mr. Richard Temple
BILL BOBSTAY (Boatswain's Mate) . . .	Mr. Clifton
JOSEPHINE (the Captain's daughter) . .	Miss Emma Howson
HEBE . . . . .	Miss Jessie Bond
LITTLE BUTTERCUP (a Portsmouth bum-boat woman) . . . . .	Miss Everard

The opera is a satire of the popular nautical shiver-my-timbers drama, of the type of the *Black-Eyed Susan*, with incidental gibes at the system which makes a civilian the head of the Navy, and at a patriotism that rejoices in platitudes and clichés. For the plot, Gilbert drew on at least six of the *Bab Ballads*. Ralph Rackstraw, the hero of *H.M.S. Pinafore*, loved his captain's daughter :

“A sailor, lowly born,  
With hopeless passion torn,

And poor beyond conceiving,  
 He has dared for her to pine  
 At whose exalted shrine  
 A world of wealth is kneeling."

In the *Bab Ballads*, Joe Go-Lightly fell in love with the daughter of the First Lord, and continually sang love-ditties to her accompanied on his guitar, for which he was severely punished by his skipper :

"Twelve months black-hole, I say,  
 Where daylight never flashes,  
 And always twice a day  
 A good six dozen lashes."

Captain Corcoran, of *H.M.S. Pinafore*, who declared :

"Bad language or abuse  
 I never never use,  
 Whatever the emergency ;  
 Though 'bother it' I may  
 Occasionally say,  
 I never use a big big D,"

is, of course, Captain Reece of the *Ballads* :

"Kind-hearted Captain Reece, R.N.,  
 Was quite devoted to his men ;  
 In point of fact good Captain Reece  
 Beatified 'The Mantelpiece.'"

Little Buttercup, the Portsmouth bumboat woman of *Pinafore*, was used before by Gilbert in *The Bumboat Woman's Story* in the *Ballads* :

"It's strange to think I should ever have loved young men,  
 But I'm speaking of ten years past—I was barely sixty then."

To arrange the scene of *Pinafore*, Gilbert drew on his considerable knowledge of ships and the sea, to which he added information acquired by several special visits to Portsmouth. Both Lord Charles Beresford and Lord Jellicoe, as has been already said, have testified to the accuracy of detail. In a letter written to Sir Arthur Sullivan from the Admiralty in December, 1887, Lord Charles Beresford said :

MY DEAR ARTHUR,—

I was perfectly delighted with *Pinafore* last night—quite excellent. You told me to tell you anything I saw which offended the eye of an expert. Don't be X. They are minor details, but make the difference in perfection and not absolute perfection. (Then follow suggestions on improved rigging, manning the yards, etc.) These are a few details, the rest is quite excellent.

Yours ever,

CHARLES BERESFORD

The immediate success of *Pinafore* was to some extent due to an admirable topical joke. Just before it was produced, Disraeli had appointed W. H. Smith, head of the well-known firm of publishers, First Lord of the Admiralty. Mr. Smith was an admirable man of business and a high-minded politician, and he proved an excellent administrator, but there was something humorous in the British Navy being ruled by a man with absolutely no sea experience, and Gilbert worked the joke for all it was worth in his picture of the Right Honourable Sir Joseph Porter, whose song, "And now I am the ruler of the Queen's Navee," remains the most popular number in the *Pinafore* score. In a letter written soon after the production, Disraeli describes a house-party at Hatfield, when the guests sang the chorus of *H.M.S. Pinafore*, and he specifically refers to Mr. Smith as "*Pinafore* Smith."

Years after, Gilbert rewrote the story specially for children, and in it he said:

"One of the most important personages in the Government of that day was Sir Joseph Porter, First Lord of the Admiralty. You would naturally think that a person who commanded the entire Navy would be the most accomplished sailor who could be found, but that is not the way in which such things are managed in England. Sir Joseph Porter . . . knew nothing whatever about ships. Now as England is a great maritime country, it is very important that all Englishmen should understand something about men-of-war. So soon as it was discovered that his ignorance of a ship was so complete that he did not know one end of it from the other, some important person said: 'Let us set this poor ignorant gentleman to command the British Fleet, and by that means give him an opportunity of ascertaining what a ship really is.' This was considered to be a most wise and sensible suggestion, and so Sir Joseph Porter was at once appointed

'First Lord of the Admiralty of Great Britain and Ireland.' I dare say you think I am joking, but indeed I am quite serious. This is the way in which things are managed in this great and happy country."

In a letter written to Sullivan on December 27, 1877, Gilbert suggests that the public would not suppose that W. H. Smith was the model for Sir Joseph Porter. He says:

DEAR SULLIVAN,—

I send you herewith a sketch plot of the proposed opera. I hope and think you will like it. I called on you two days ago (not knowing you had gone away) to consult you about it before drawing it up in full. I have very little doubt, however, but that you will be pleased with it. I should like to talk it over with you, as there is a good deal of fun in it which I haven't set down on paper. Among other things, a song (kind of "Judge's song") for the First Lord—tracing his career as office-boy in a cotton-broker's office, clerk, traveller, junior partner, and First Lord of Britain's Navy. I think a splendid song could be made of this. Of course, there will be no personality in this—the fact that the First Lord in the opera is a radical of the most pronounced type will do away with any suspicion that W. H. Smith is intended. . . .

The uniforms of the officers and crew will be effective. The chorus will look like sailors, and I will ask to have their uniforms made for them in Portsmouth.

I shall be very anxious to know what you think of the plot. It seems to me there is plenty of story in it (*The Sorcerer* lacks story), with good musical situations. Josephine can have two good ballads, and so can Ralph.

I hope you will have fine weather and that the change will do you a lot of good. As soon as I hear from you that the plot will do, I will set to work, sending you the first act as soon as it is finished.

Very truly yours,

W. S. GILBERT

This letter is interesting and important because it shows that, certain as Gilbert always was of himself, from the beginning of the collaboration he deferred to the opinions of his collaborator and was anxious for his opinion and commendation.

In many of the *Pinafore* lyrics Gilbert is at his very best. There is the pleasantly familiar charm in Josephine's song:

“ Sorry her lot who loves too well,  
Heavy the heart that hopes but vainly,  
Sad are the sighs that own the spell  
Uttered by eyes that speak too plainly ;  
Heavy the sorrow that bows the head  
When love is alive and hope is dead !

“ Sad is the hour when sets the sun—  
Dark is the night to earth’s poor daughters,  
When to the ark the wearied one  
Flies from the empty waste of waters !  
Heavy the sorrow that bows the head  
When love is alive and hope is dead ! ”

Gilbert gave Sullivan the opportunity for an inimitable burlesque of Italian opera when he wrote the words of the scene which begins :

“ The hours creep on apace,  
My guilty heart is quaking !  
Oh, that I might retract  
The step that I am taking.  
Its folly it were easy to be showing,  
What I am giving up and whither going.”

A year after its performance in London, an edition of *H.M.S. Pinafore* was published in New York, and on the title-page the opera was described as “ the reigning sensation throughout all the theatre circles all over the world.” That may have been an American picturesque overstatement, but the words and the music of *Pinafore* have to-day a world-wide popularity, and, as one knows the great comic characters of fiction, so one knows the gentleman of whom his crew sang :

“ He is the captain of the *Pinafore*,  
And a right good captain too.”

*The Pirates of Penzance* was produced at the Opéra-Comique Theatre on April 3, 1880. The cast was almost the same as that of *H.M.S. Pinafore* :

MAJOR-GENERAL STANLEY . . . . .	<i>Mr. George Grossmith</i>
THE PIRATE KING . . . . .	<i>Mr. Richard Temple</i>
SAMUEL (his Lieutenant) . . . . .	<i>Mr. George Temple</i>
FREDERICK (the Pirate Apprentice) . . . . .	<i>Mr. George Power</i>
SERGEANT OF POLICE . . . . .	<i>Mr. Rutland Barrington</i>
MABEL (General Stanley's daughter) . . . . .	<i>Miss Marion Hood</i>
EDITH . . . . .	<i>Miss Jessie Bond</i>
KATE . . . . .	<i>Miss Julia Gwynne</i>
ISABEL . . . . .	<i>Miss M. Barlow</i>
RUTH (a pirate maid-of-all-work) . . . . .	<i>Miss Alice Barnett</i>

George Grossmith and Rutland Barrington had made their first appearance on the stage in *The Sorcerer*, and Miss Marion Hood made hers in the *Pirates*. Miss Julia Gwynne afterwards became Mrs. George Edwards. The Comedy Opera Company came to an end with *Patience*, and *The Pirates of Penzance* was produced by Mr. D'Oyly Carte alone. It thus marks the beginning of the partnership between author, composer, and manager. It has been suggested that the germ of the idea of the opera was the kidnapping of Gilbert in Naples when he was a small child, but the intention is obvious—a burlesque of melodrama with pirates as heroes, as Gay made highwaymen heroes in *The Beggar's Opera*. The burlesque may appear exaggerated, but, as Mr. William Archer has said: "Gilbert's pirate king seems to us an almost inconceivable caricature, but he does not exaggerate the poses and gestures, which had been accepted as serious art until well on in the nineteenth century." The conclusion of *The Pirates of Penzance* is pure topsy-turvydom. The pirates are overcome by the police:

GENERAL. Away with them and place them at the Bar!

RUTH. One moment, let me tell you who they are.  
They are no member of the common throng;  
They are all noblemen who have gone wrong!

GENERAL. No Englishman unmoved that statement hears,  
Because with all our faults we love our House of Peers.

In the second act, Gilbert gibes at the pretentiousness of the *nouveaux riches*. General Stanley is discovered seated pensively in a ruined chapel. He is unhappy because, in

order to escape from the pirates, he has described himself falsely as an orphan, and he has come to humble himself before the tombs of his ancestors. He is reminded that he only bought the property a year before :

GENERAL. Frederic, in this chapel are ancestors ; you cannot deny that. With the estate I bought the chapel and its contents. I don't know whose ancestors they *were*, but I know whose ancestors they *are*, and I shudder to think that their descendant by purchase (if I may so describe myself) should have brought disgrace upon what, I have no doubt, was an unstained escutcheon.

The best-known song in *The Pirates of Penzance* is the policeman's song, " When a felon's not engaged in his employment." Gilbert was very fond of good-naturedly laughing at the police. For example, the song of the policeman in the *Bab Ballads* :

" Come with me, little maid,  
Come to the rocky shade,  
I love to sing ;  
Live with us, maiden rare—  
Come, for we ' want ' thee there,  
You elfin thing,  
To work thy spell  
In some cool cell  
In stately Pentonville."

It may be interesting to print the following Latin translation of the policeman's song. The first verse is by Arthur Chilton. The second was sent to Dr. Chilton by the Bishop of Southampton when he was Bishop of Tokyo.

" Ubi fraudibus fraudator abrogatis  
Abrogatis  
Secum mediatur nil nefarii  
'arii  
Innocentis erit capax voluptatis  
voluptatis  
Sicut ego, sicut tu et ceteri  
ceteri.  
Aequam mentem non est cuilibet servare  
'bet servare  
Quando transigendum est negotium  
'otium





" Poor wandering one,  
Though thou hast surely strayed,  
Take heart of grace,  
Thy steps retrace,  
Be not afraid.  
Poor wandering one,  
If such poor love as mine  
Can help thee find  
True peace of mind—  
Why, take it, it is thine !  
Take heart, fair days will shine.  
Take any heart—take mine.  
Take heart ; no danger lowers.  
Take any heart—but ours."

During the writing of *The Pirates of Penzance*, Gilbert wrote to Sullivan in a letter dated August 7, 1879 :

" I have broken the neck of Act II, and see my way clearly to the end. I think it comes out very well.

" By the way, I've made great use of the ' Tarantara ' business in Act II. The police always sing ' Tarantara ' when they desire to work their courage to sticking-point. They are naturally timid, but through the agency of this talisman they are enabled to acquit themselves well when concealed. In Act II, when the robbers approach, their courage begins to fail them, but recourse to ' Tarantara ' (pianissimo) has the desired effect. I mention this that you may bear it in mind in setting the General's ' Tarantara ' song. I mean that it may be treated as an important feature and not as a mere incidental effect. I need not say that this is mere suggestion. If you don't like it, it won't be done."

The chorus sung by General Stanley's daughters on their first entrance is taken almost word for word from *Thespis*, and the only weak point in an opera which Mr. Walbrook has well described as " of almost flawless elegance," is the too frequent reiteration of the joke hung on the two words " orphan and often." *The Pirates of Penzance* remains one of the most popular of the Gilbert and Sullivan series.

1880 was the year of what is known as the " æsthetic craze." The revolution in taste, the revolt against the ugliness of Victorian materialism, due to a large extent to the influence of the Pre-Raphaelites, had its inevitable exaggerations. While

William Morris was making beautiful curtains and the man in the suburbs was scrapping his wax flowers and antimacassars, Oscar Wilde was posing and there was a flood of artistic cant. *Patience*, produced at the Opéra-Comique on April 3, 1888, satirized this æsthetic craze, which had already been gaily mocked by George du Maurier in the pages of *Punch*. Indeed, when *Patience* was produced, the craze had almost run its course, and it was no longer the artistic thing

“ To walk down Piccadilly,  
With a poppy or a lily  
In your mediæval hand.”

It may have been supposed that a comic opera intended to burlesque a topical extravagance could have had nothing more than ephemeral interest, but none of the operas has a greater popularity to-day than *Patience*. The fact is, of course, that there are artistic poseurs in every age, and one wild extravagance follows another. Æsthetes are followed by Futurists, and Futurists have now given way to poets whose verses have neither rhyme nor reason ; and a burlesque of the æsthetes is a burlesque of their successors. The military interest in *Patience* has unquestionably had much to do with its success.

The original libretto was based on the *Bab Ballad*, *The Rival Curates*. It may be remembered that the poet says of the Reverend Hopley Porter of Assesmilk-cum-Worter :

“ He plays the airy flute,  
And looks depressed and blighted.  
Doves around him toot,  
And lambkins dance delighted.”

But bad advice caused Mr. Hopley Porter to shed his mildness, smoke large cigars, and wink at every passing girl. Gilbert's idea was to describe how dashing cavalry officers were cut out by mild curates, and in order to win their ladies' favour, surrendered their commissions and took orders, a development of the vicar's song in *The Sorcerer*. However, he came to the conclusion that a chorus of comic clergymen might

give offence, and he twisted his libretto to the æsthetic movement. He wrote to Sullivan on November 1, 1880 :

"I want to see you particularly about the new piece. Although it is about two-thirds finished, I don't feel comfortable about it. I mistrust the clerical element. I feel hampered by the restrictions which the nature of the subject places upon my freedom of action, and I want to revert to my old idea of rivalry between two æsthetic fanatics, worshipped by a chorus of female æsthetes, instead of a couple of clergymen worshipped by a chorus of female devotees. I can get much more fun out of the subject, as I propose to alter it, and the general scheme of the piece will remain as at present. The Hussars will become æsthetic young men (abandoning their profession for the purpose). In this latter capacity they will all carry lilies in their hands, wear long hair, and stand in stained-glass attitudes. I entertained this idea at first, as you may remember, but abandoned it because I foresaw great difficulty in getting the chorus to dress and make up æsthetically. But if we can get Du Maurier to design the costumes, I don't know that the difficulty will be insuperable."

Sullivan wrote a particularly happy score for *Patience*, and Gilbert himself maintained that its popularity was "mainly referable to the delightful music." The following was the original cast :

REGINALD BUNTHORNE (a Fleshy Poet)	.	<i>Mr. George Grossmith</i>
ARCHIBALD GROSVENOR (an Idyllic Poet)	.	<i>Mr. Rutland Barrington</i>
COLONEL CALVERLEY	} Officers of	<i>Mr. Walter Browne</i>
MAJOR MURGATROYD		<i>Mr. Frank Thornton</i>
LIEUT. THE DUKE OF		<i>Mr. Durward Lely</i>
DUNSTABLE		
THE LADY ANGELA	} Rapturous Maidens	<i>Miss Jessie Bond</i>
THE LADY SAPHIR		<i>Miss Julia Gwynne</i>
THE LADY ELLA		<i>Miss Fortescue</i>
THE LADY JANE		<i>Miss Alice Barnett</i>

The name of Mr. George Edwardes, who was Mr. D'Oyly Carte's manager, appears on the first programme of *Patience*.

*Patience* contains many of the more familiar Gilbert and Sullivan songs—*The Heavy Dragoon*; *When I first put this uniform on*; *Prithee, pretty maiden, prithee tell me true*; *A magnet hung in a hardware shop*; the "Most intense young man" duet. The Governor's song is a new version of *Gentle-Archibald* of the *Bab Ballads*, which we have already quoted.

The middle-aged amorist again appears as "Lady Jane," and Gilbert was bitterly, and, as it seems to us, unfairly, criticized for her song :

"Fading is the taper waist,  
Shapeless grows the shapely limb,  
And although securely laced,  
Spreading is the figure trim !  
Stouter than I used to be,  
Still more corpulent grow I—  
There will be too much of me  
In the coming by-and-by."

The fun is surely as good-humoured as it is ingenious, and it again must be insisted that it is not middle-age at which Gilbert laughs, but middle-age striving frantically to clutch at departing youth.

Musically, the gem of the opera is the unaccompanied sextet :

"I hear the soft note of the echoing voice  
Of an old, old love long dead,  
It whispers my sorrowing heart 'rejoice,'  
For the last sad tear is shed—  
The pain that is all but a pleasure we'll change  
For the pleasure that's all but pain,  
And never, oh never, this heart will range  
From that old, old love again !"

The dialogue is characteristic in its extravagance. The Rapturous Maidens decline to marry the Heavy Dragoon :

SAPHIR. It can never be. You are not Empyrean. You are not Della Cruscan. You are not even Early English. Oh, be Early English ere it is too late ! (*Officers look at each other in astonishment.*)

JANE (*looking at uniform*). Red and yellow ! Primary colours. Oh, South Kensington !

DUKE. We didn't design our uniforms, but we don't see how they could be improved.

JANE. No, you wouldn't. Still, there *is* a cobwebby grey velvet, with a tender bloom like cold gravy, which, made Florentine fourteenth century, trimmed with Venetian leather and Spanish altar lace, and surmounted with something Japanese—it matters not what—would at least be Early English !

The unprecedented success of *Pinafore*, *The Pirates of Penzance*, and *Patience*, and the establishment of Gilbert and Sullivan opera as a popular form of public entertainment, induced Mr. D'Oyly Carte to build a larger and more commodious theatre, particularly for its exploitation. He bought a site between the Strand and the Embankment, and the Savoy Theatre was opened on October 10, 1881, with *Patience* transferred from the Opéra-Comique. The Savoy was the first theatre to be lighted, both stage and auditorium, by electricity. In a published address to the public, Mr. D'Oyly Carte said :

“ This is the first time that it has been attempted to light any public building entirely by electricity. What is being done is an experiment, and may succeed, or fail. It is not possible, until the application of the accumulator or secondary battery—the reserve store of electric power—becomes practical, to guarantee absolutely against any breakdown of the electric light. To provide such a contingency, gas is laid on throughout the building, and the ‘ pilot ’ light of the central sunburner will always be kept alight, so that in case of accidents the theatre can be flooded with gas-light in a few seconds.”

This makes strange reading in these days. The Savoy Theatre originally held about £270 when quite full, and it is interesting, in view of the inflated expense of running a theatre, which is nowadays strangling theatrical art in England, to note that at the beginning the current expenses of the Savoy Theatre were about half the possible takings. It is possible that other plays were greater individual successes than any of the Gilbert and Sullivan series, but from this point of view the unique fact about the operas is that not one of them was a failure. At the Savoy, author and composer were the partners of the manager, and they had absolute control of the stage. Scenery, dresses, acting, and singing were all Gilbert and Sullivan. As we have said in an earlier chapter, Gilbert was a masterly stage-manager. He always went to the theatre knowing exactly what he wanted. He himself said :

“ Of course, I planned out the whole stage-management beforehand, on my model stage, with blocks three inches high to represent men,

and two and a half inches to represent women. I knew exactly what groupings I wanted—how many people I could have on this bank, how many on that rostrum, and so forth. I had it all clear in my head before going down to the theatre; and there the actors and actresses were good enough to believe in me and to lend themselves heartily to all I required of them. You see, I had the exact measure of their capabilities, and took good care that the work I gave them should be well within their grasp.”

Mr. Percy Fitzgerald says in his book, *The Savoy Opera* :

“Grossmith has related the regular course and incidents at the rehearsals at the Savoy. The music is always learned first—the choruses, finales, etc., are composed first in order, then the quartettes and trios, the songs last. Sometimes, owing to changes and rewriting, these are given out to the singers very late. The song in the second act of *Princess Ida* was given to Grossmith only a night or two before the performance, and he found his chief difficulty not in learning the new tune, but in unlearning the old one. ‘The greatest interest is evinced by us all as the new vocal numbers arrive. Sir A. Sullivan will come suddenly, a batch of manuscript under his arm, and announce that there is something new. He plays over the new number—the vocal parts only are written. The conductor listens and watches, and after hearing them played over a few times, contrives to pick up all the harmonies, casual accompaniments, etc.’ Sir Arthur is always strict in wishing that his music shall be sung exactly as he has written it. One of the leading performers was singing an air at rehearsal, not exactly dividing the notes as they were written, and giving the general form, as it were. ‘Bravo,’ said Sir Arthur, ‘that is really a very good air of yours. Now, if you have no objection, I will ask you to sing mine.’ This is pleasant.

“Gilbert always listens carefully during these recitals, making mental notes for possible effects. At his home, as I have said, he has his little model stage, where the characters are represented by little bricks of various colours, the chorus being distinguished from the leading singers. . . . The music rehearsals, Grossmith tells us, are ‘child’s play in comparison with the stage rehearsals. Mr. Gilbert is a perfect autocrat, insisting that his words shall be delivered, even to an inflexion of the voice, as he dictates. He will stand on the stage beside the actor or actress, and repeat the words, with appropriate action, over and over again until they are delivered as he desires. In some instances, of course, he allows a little licence, but a very little.’

“Grossmith then describes a typical scene. Say Mr. Snooks has to utter some such sentence as this: ‘The king is in the counting-house.’ This is his *whole* part, and he naturally wishes to make it go as far as possible. He accordingly enters with a grotesque, slow walk which he has carefully practised. He is instantly checked by the author.

"Please don't enter like that, Mr. Snooks. We don't want any comic-man business here." "I beg pardon, sir," poor Snooks replies, "I thought you meant the part to be funny." "Yes, so I do, but I don't want you to tell the audience you're the funny man. They'll find it out, if you are, quickly enough." Snooks tries again, entering with smart rapidity. "No, no; don't hurry in that way. Enter like this," and Gilbert showing him the way, the thing is got right at last. He then repeats his line, "The king is in the counting-house," laying the accent on *house*. This has to be gone over and over again, but without result.

"The luckless player will make it *house*. At last, the author gives it up in despair, and announces that as it is impossible to cut out the line altogether, which he would gladly do, he would be obliged reluctantly to allot the character to some one else. "Do think a moment," he says, "before you speak now." The wretched man endeavours to think, and then, quite desperate, almost shouts: "The king is in the counting-HOUSE." "We won't bother about it any more," says Gilbert; "get on with the next—Grossmith—where's Grossmith?" However, at the end of the rehearsal our author good-naturedly accosts the despairing Snooks, and comforts him. "Don't worry yourself about that. Go home and think it over. It will be all right to-morrow." On the morrow, however, it is much the same, but by dint of incessant repeating, like Smikey, "Who calls so loud?" the proper emphasis is at last secured.

"So conscientious are our authors in preparing their effects that on the rehearsals of the last piece a sort of stage or scaffold was raised in the stalls to enable them to have the correct 'audience view' of all that was doing. At the final full-dress rehearsal the night before the performance, though the theatre was filled, the first three rows of the stalls were railed off, so as to allow composer and writer a free range, to study the effects."

On November 25, 1882, *Patience* was succeeded by *Iolanthe* with the following cast:

THE LORD CHANCELLOR . . . . .	Mr. George Grossmith
EARL OF MOUNTARARAT . . . . .	Mr. Rutland Barrington
EARL TOLLOLLER . . . . .	Mr. Durward Lely
PRIVATE WILLIS (of the Grenadier Guards) .	Mr. Charles Manners
STREPHON (an Arcadian Shepherd) . . .	Mr. R. Temple
QUEEN OF THE FAIRIES . . . . .	Miss Alice Barnett
IOLANTHE (a Fairy, Strephon's mother) .	Miss Jessie Bond
CELIA } Fairies . . . . .	Miss Fortescue
LEILA } . . . . .	Miss Julia Gwynne
FLETA } . . . . .	Miss Sybil Grey
PHYLLIS (an Arcadian Shepherdess and Ward in Chancery) . . . . .	Miss Leonora Braham



The plot of *Iolanthe* is taken from the *Bab Ballad*, *George and the Fairies*, the idea, of course, being a fairy wedded to a mortal and the offspring partaking of the natures of both his parents. In the *Bab Ballad* the father is an attorney. In the opera he is the "highly susceptible Chancellor." Gilbert frequently complained that the Press had constantly treated him unfairly, and this is true, at least of *Punch*, which was always Gilbert's most severe critic. After the most enthusiastic first night of *Iolanthe*, *Punch* declared that "as a musical or dramatic work *Iolanthe* is not within a mile of *Pinafore* or a patch on *Patience*." It went on to say that the fantastic idea of beings half-mortal and half-fairy is "something not quite pleasant"—a delicious example of Podsnappery. It is amazing to find that offence could be found in poor Strephon, of whom his mother said: "He is a fairy down to his waist, but his legs are mortal."

In creating the Lord Chancellor in *Iolanthe*, Gilbert used all his legal knowledge, and of his gibes at Bench and Bar it may be safely said:

"The joke is good extremely,  
And justifies the mirth."

The Lord Chancellor's songs:

"The Law's the true embodiment  
Of everything that's excellent,"

and *When I went to the Bar as a very young man*, are probably more widely known than any other songs in the English language. The "Nightmare" song is Gilbert's supreme achievement as a patter song—quite amazing in its ingenuity. Fifteen years before, he had written in *Fun* some verses of the same metre, called *Sixty-Three and Sixty-Four*:

'Oh, you who complain that the drawing's insane, or too much for  
your noddles have found it,  
But listen a minute, I'll tell you what's in it—completely explain  
and expound it,

With intellect weaselly, artist has easily earned all his bacon and greens by it,  
And now that it's done and all ready for FUN, it's my duty to say what he means by it.  
First Beef-eaters, twain, who are hide-ously plain, with a very great deal too much flesh on,  
Are placed, I dare say, to keep clear all the way, like the 'pleece' in a civic procession.  
Two pantomime actors—disgraceful characters, for each is a thief and a chartist  
(The clown little charms, for he's weak in the arms, but of course that's the fault of the artist),  
Stealing and shouting, and bad-doggerel spouting, completely regardless of rhyme or ear—  
Melody metrical, authors theatrical little regard at this time o' year ;  
Each of the pair you distinguish down there, a barbarous Pan or a Sat'r I call  
(But stop, surely 'rhyme or ear' scarce rhymes with 'time o' year' —'metrical' don't with 'theatrical').

“Two gentlemen, then, stout hale-looking men, and they carry the season's necessities,  
What's that in the bowl? How it flames! on my soul, I've not the least notion unless it is  
Something to drink—it must be that I think; there is pudding and beef and a turkey,  
Savoury sausages—offspring of coarse ages, round the fat gobbler lurk ye!  
Ha! ha! Christmas boxes! purveyors of oxes, greengrocer and baker whom Hodge I call.  
(Fox plural is 'foxes,' so why not ox 'oxes'? The language is strangely illogical!)

A well-bred young man, meeting Julia and Anne, puts a smile that he fancies will please on,  
And offers, on meeting, the usual greeting—the compliments viz. of the season.  
(Whatever they are, it's a phrase popular in the various elegant 'sets,' I know,  
I pay them away, and I wish I could say, that with them I could pay all my debts, I know!)

The waits, wet and chilly, so long have missed WILLIE, the tie is quite broken asunder ;  
Now utterly crazy, they envy the saisy, and long to be one, and no wonder!

One more unfortunate, mutely importunate, huddled, a mass in a corner;  
 Miseries harden her—pardon her, pardon her—think of the cold when you scorn her;  
 Just to the left of her, utterly deaf to ver-acity, idle men two are,  
 Begging a farden, as frozen as frozen-out gardeners—just as much gard'ners as you are!  
 Letters from editors, dunning from creditors, vile red and white intimations,  
 That rates not a few (made October) are due, and that these are the LAST APPLICATIONS.  
 The cursed collector he bullies like HÆCTOR, and duns in a manner which funny ain't;  
 How on earth I'm to pay, I'm unable to say, for the rates *may* be made, but the money ain't.  
 The thinking these things on, insanity brings on, my brain thoughts of suicide enter,  
 I almost think I'll run myself on a file, like the man up above in the centre!  
 The poor wretched prisoner (right corner) is in a sad state—his thoughts melancholy ones;  
 His wicked mind wends to his open-air friends—they are thieves, but uncommonly jolly ones!  
 Time, the physician (sure no one could wish an adviser with aspect more knowing),  
 Is earning a fee of old year Sixty-Three, who's beginning to think about going;  
 The noisy church-bell is a-ringing his knell—it's a delicate favour to do one;  
 Its JANUS-like tone kills two birds with one stone, for it heralds the birth of a new one!

He sleeps the long trance—not a ghost of a chance of renewal of lease by his lessor;  
*Il est mort, ce pauvre roi!* Shall we sorrow, *Pourquoi?* let us rather cry 'Vive his successor!'  
 Anxious, uncommon I, great Anno Domini, am to know what you've in store for me,  
 What will you pour for me none can explore for me, which you'll admit is a bore for me,  
 The kid (if you pliz, I don't know who he is) takes 'steps' Sixty-Three for to score out,  
 And I hope that all we who've seen old Sixty-Three will be here to bow young Sixty-Four out!"

Topsy-turvydom finds a perfect expression in the well-known lines :

“ Spurn not the nobly born  
                    With love affected,  
Nor treat with virtuous scorn  
                    The well-connected.  
High rank involves no shame—  
We boast an equal claim  
With him of humble name  
                    To be respected—  
Blue blood ! Blue blood !  
                    When virtuous love is sought,  
                    Thy power is naught,  
Though dating from the Flood,  
                    Blue blood !

“ Spare us the bitter pain  
                    Of stern denials,  
Nor with low-born disdain  
                    Augment our trials.  
Hearts just as pure and fair  
May beat in Belgrave Square  
As in the lowly air  
                    Of Seven Dials !  
Blue blood ! Blue blood ! ”

The same idea is expressed in Lord Mountararat's song :

“ The House of Peers throughout the war  
Did nothing in particular,  
                    And did it very well.”

Gilbert the humorist is found in *Iolanthe* with his :

“ I wouldn't say a word that could be construed as injurious,  
But to find a mother younger than her son is curious,  
And that's the kind of mother that is usually spurious.”

Gilbert the gay, laughing jester is in the Fairies' song :

“ If you ask us how we live,  
Lovers all essentials give—  
We can ride on lovers' sighs,  
Warm ourselves in lovers' eyes,  
Bathe ourselves in lovers' tears,  
Clothe ourselves in lovers' fears,

Arm ourselves with lovers' darts,  
Hide ourselves in lovers' hearts.

"When you know us, you'll discover  
That we almost live on lover!"

And Gilbert with his power of genuine pathos is discovered when he writes:

"He loves! If in the bygone years  
Thine eyes have ever shed  
Tears—bitter, unavailing tears,  
For one untimely dead—  
If in the eventide of life  
Sad thoughts of her arise,  
Then let the memory of thy wife  
Plead for my boy—he dies!"

"He dies! If fondly laid aside  
In some old cabinet,  
Memorials of thy long-dead bride  
Lie, dearly treasured yet,  
Then let her hallowed bridal dress—  
Her little dainty gloves—  
Her withered flowers—her faded tress—  
Plead for my boy—he loves!"

And good as they all are—fairies and peers and Lord Chancellor—there is no Gilbertian character more attractive than the sentry, with his admirable song and his suddenly sprouting wings.

At the dress rehearsal of *Iolanthe*, Gilbert said to the chorus, who represented the House of Lords: "For Heaven's sake wear your coronets as if you were used to them!"

In 1870, *The Princess*, which Gilbert described as "a whimsical allegory, being a respectful perversion of Mr. Tennyson's poem," was produced at the Olympic Theatre. This was the basis of the libretto of *Princess Ida*, which was produced by Mr. D'Oyly Carte at the Savoy Theatre on January 5, 1884. It may be interesting to compare the two casts:

1870

KING HILDEBRAND . . . . .	Mr. David Fisher
PRINCE HILARION (his Son) . . . . .	Miss Maria Simpson (Mrs. W. H. Liston)
CYRIL } His Friends, Noblemen of King FLORIAN } Hildebrand's Court	{ Miss Augusta Thomson { Miss Montgomery
KING GAMA . . . . .	Mr. Elliott
PRINCE ARAC } PRINCE GURON } His Sons . . . . .	{ Miss Jessie Earle { Miss Harrington
PRINCE SCYNTHIUS }	{ Miss Ewell
ATHO (King Hildebrand's Chamberlain) . .	Mr. Franks
FIRST OFFICER . . . . .	Mr. Arthur Brown
SECOND OFFICER . . . . .	Mr. Davis
GOBBO (a Porter) . . . . .	Mr. St. Maur
PRINCESS IDA (Daughter of King Gama and Principal of the Ladies' University) .	Miss Mattie Reinhardt
LADY PSYCHE (Professor of Experimental Science) . . . . .	Miss Fanny Addison
LADY BLANCHE (Professor of Abstract Philo- sophy) . . . . .	Mrs. Poynter
MELISSA (her Daughter) . . . . .	Miss Patti Josephs
BERTHA } ADA } CHLOE } SACHARISSA } SYLVIA } Undergraduates . . . . .	{ Miss Joy { Miss Clyfoard { Miss Moore { Miss Alma { Miss Everard { Miss Fitzjames { Miss Corinne { Miss Graham { Miss Clara
PHYLLIS }	
AMARANTHE }	
LAURA }	

1884

KING HILDEBRAND . . . . .	Mr. Rutland Barrington
HILARION (his Son) . . . . .	Mr. H. Bracy
CYRIL } Hilarion's Friends . . . . .	{ Mr. Durward Lely
FLORIAN }	{ Mr. Chas. Ryley
KING GAMA . . . . .	Mr. George Grossmith
ARAC } GURON } His Sons . . . . .	{ Mr. Richard Temple { Mr. Warwick Gray
SCYNTHIUS }	{ Mr. Lugg
PRINCESS IDA (Gama's Daughter) . . .	Miss Leonora Braham
LADY BLANCHE (Professor of Abstract Philo- sophy) . . . . .	Miss Brandram
LADY PSYCHE (Professor of Humanities) .	Miss Kate Chard
MELISSA (Lady Blanche's Daughter) . .	Miss Jessie Bond
SACHARISSA } CHLOE } Girl Graduates . . . . .	{ Miss Sybil Grey { Miss Heathcote
ADA }	{ Miss Lilian Carr

It will be seen that certain male parts were played by actresses in the earlier version, but were taken by men in the Savoy opera. Gilbert never allowed women to wear men's clothes in the Savoy operas. The dialogue of *Princess Ida* is written in blank verse, and much of it is taken bodily from the earlier play. *Princess Ida* is the only opera of the Gilbert and Sullivan series written in three acts. In many respects it is the least interesting of the series, as it proved the least successful. And yet it contains some of Gilbert's most attractive writing and many of Sullivan's charming melodies. The composer, indeed, was at his very best in writing the trio in the first act:

"Expressive glances  
Shall be our lances  
                    And pops of Sillery  
                    Our light artillery.  
We'll storm their bowers  
With scented showers  
Of fairest flowers  
                    That we can buy!"

The *Disagreeable Man* is capital fun, and was one of the songs that Gilbert himself always liked:

"If you will give me your attention, I will tell you what I am.  
I'm a genuine philanthropist—all other kinds are sham!  
Each little fault of temper, and each social defect  
In my erring fellow-creatures, I endeavour to correct.  
To all their little weaknesses I open people's eyes,  
And little plans to snub the self-sufficient I devise!  
I love my fellow-creatures—I do all the good I can;  
Yet everybody says I'm such a disagreeable man!  
                    And I can't think why!

"To compliments inflated I've a withering reply,  
And vanity I always do my best to mortify;  
A charitable action I can skilfully dissect;  
And interested motives I'm delighted to detect;  
I know everybody's income and what everybody earns;  
And I carefully compare it with the income-tax returns;  
But to benefit humanity however much I plan,  
Yet everybody says I'm such a disagreeable man!  
                    And I can't think why!

"I'm sure I'm no ascetic—I'm as pleasant as can be;  
You'll always find me ready with a crushing repartee;  
I've an irritating chuckle, I've a celebrated sneer,  
I've an entertaining snigger, I've a fascinating leer.  
To everybody's prejudice I know a thing or two,  
I can tell a woman's age in half a minute—and I do.  
But although I try to make myself as pleasant as I can,  
Yet everybody says I'm such a disagreeable man!  
And I can't think why!"

In one lyric, Gilbert is again in Herrick mood:

"Whom thou hast chained must wear his chain,  
Thou canst not set him free,  
He wrestles with his bonds in vain  
Who lives by loving thee!  
If heart of stone for heart of fire,  
Be all thou hast to give,  
If dead to me my heart's desire,  
Why should I wish to live?"

"No word of thine—no stern command  
Can teach my heart to rove,  
Then rather perish by thy hand,  
Than live without thy love!  
A loveless life apart from thee  
Were hopeless slavery,  
If kindly death will set me free,  
Why should I fear to die?"

Rarely, if ever, did Gilbert write more charmingly. Repeating his familiar chaffing of the aristocratic soldier, he makes the sons of King Gama sing:

"Politics we bar,  
They are not our bent;  
On the whole we are  
Not intelligent."

Mr. Walbrook has an excellent story of the first night of *Princess Ida*. Gilbert was sitting quietly in the green-room when the Frenchman who had made the armour rushed in excitedly and said: "Mais, monsieur, savez-vous que vous avez là un succès solide?" "Oh, I think it's going very well," said Gilbert. The Frenchman was disgusted by this



display of British phlegm: "Mais, vous êtes si calme!"—and walked out of the room. In telling this story, Gilbert added: "I think he wanted me to kiss all the carpenters."

During the writing of the opera, Gilbert wrote to Sullivan:

DEAR SULLIVAN,—

Here is Act I finished. I have made certain alterations in the first two or three numbers. I think you will say they are improvements. Don't you think the act might end with "O dainty triolet," etc., followed by the departure of the Princes Arac, Guron, and Scynthus breaking from their captors to rush after Hilarion, Cyril, and Florian, to be captured at once as the act drop falls—this possibly to be without words and done to a symphony? It would make a good picture, I think.

Yours very truly,  
W. S. GILBERT.

The suggestion was not carried out, the act actually finishing with the trio:

"For a month to dwell  
In a dungeon cell,  
Growing thin and wizen  
In a solitary prison,  
Is a poor look-out  
For a soldier stout,  
Who is longing for the rattle  
Of a complicated battle."

On March 14, 1885, *The Mikado*, the most popular of all the Gilbert and Sullivan series, was produced at the Savoy. It has not only been played innumerable times in England and America, but for years it has been in the regular repertoire of the German theatres, and it has given its author and composer an international reputation. It is interesting to recall the conditions prevailing in the London theatres on the evening *The Mikado* was produced. We quote from Mr. Walbrook:

"Irving is away in America, so we miss that solid block of people in his old pit entrance; and Toole is on tour in the provinces; but the Bancrofts are at the Haymarket, Henry Arthur Jones's play *Saints and Sinners* is at the Vaudeville, Wilson Barrett is acting in Lord Lytton's play *Junius* at the Princess's in Oxford Street—Edward Terry

is convulsing the public at the Gaiety in the burlesque *Mazeppa*; W. S. Penley is causing the audience at the Globe to roll in their seats as he babbles of milk and Bath-buns in *The Private Secretary*; Charles Wyndham is dazzling a crowded house in the humours of the *Candidate* at the merry little Criterion; Promenade Concerts are being given at Her Majesty's, and there is a Circus at the Opera House in Covent Garden."

*The Mikado* is one of the few Savoy operas the idea of which cannot be traced back to the *Bab Ballads*. It was received with enthusiasm by both Press and public, and it ran for 672 performances. As usual, Gilbert took immense pains to get the details of costumes and scenery and movements exactly right, and in this he received great help from Lord Redesdale, and also from a number of Japanese craftsmen who happened to be exhibiting their skill at the time at Knightsbridge. Gilbert hired some of these Japanese to teach principals and chorus how to use their fans, and it will be remembered how large a part the fan plays in the action of the play.

Though the scene is Old Japan, and though the characters have Japanese names and imitate Japanese manners, the satire and the fun are English in their objective. The familiar elderly lady in love reappears in Katisha. Pooh-Bah is the well-born pluralist.

"It is consequently my degrading duty to serve this upstart, this First Lord of the Treasury, Lord Chief Justice, Commander-in-Chief, Lord High Admiral, Master of the Buckhounds, Groom of the Backstairs, Archbishop of Titipu, and Lord Mayor, both acting and elect, all rolled into one. And at a salary! A Pooh-Bah paid for his services! I a salaried minion! But I do it! It revolts me, but I do it!"

So familiar has the character become that Pooh-Bah is the common name for a pluralist as Mr. Pecksniff is for a humbug. Incidentally, Pooh-Bah gave Mr. Rutland Barrington the greatest success of his theatrical career.

*The Mikado* is all sparkle from beginning to end, from Nanki-Poo's first song:

"A wandering minstrel I—  
 A thing of shreds and patches,  
 Of ballads, songs and snatches,  
 A dreamy lullaby,"

to the finale:

"The threatened cloud has passed away,  
 And brightly shines the dawning day,  
 What though the night may come too soon,  
 We've years and years of afternoon!"

The "Three little maids from school" trio is a sheer joy and the grim joke that Gilbert loved so well is instinct in the lines:

"To sit in solemn silence in a dull, dark dock,  
 In a pestilential prison with a life-long lock,  
 Awaiting the sensation of a short, sharp shock,  
 Of a cheap and chippy chopper on a big black block!"

There is the same burlesque grimness in:

"As in three weeks you've got to die,  
 If Ko-Ko tells us true,  
 'Twere empty compliment to cry  
 'Long life to Nanki-Poo!'—  
 But as you've got three weeks to live  
 As fellow-citizen,  
 This toast with three times three we'll give—  
 'Long life to you—till then!'"

All the world knows the madrigal "Brightly dawns our wedding day," and the Mikado's song, allusions to which are now among the counters of everyday conversation:

"My object all sublime  
 I shall achieve in time—  
 To let the punishment fit the crime,"

and the ingenious "Tit-willow," in the writing of which Gilbert proved that a comic song may possess the quality of daintiness.

In every opera it would seem that Gilbert was determined once more to prove his versatility, and nowhere does he succeed more completely than in *The Mikado*, though here the senti-

mentalist is tightly held by the humorist, and one of the most charming of the lyrics is sung by a comic character :

“ Hearts do not break !  
 They sting and ache  
 For old sake's sake,  
                     But do not die !  
 Though with each breath  
 They long for death,  
 As witnesseth  
                     The living I ! ”

The note of pathos is sounded, and then away again to the fun and the frolic :

KATISHA. There is beauty in the bellow of the blast,  
                     There is grandeur in the growling of the gale,  
                     There is eloquent outpouring  
                     When the lion is a-roaring,  
 And the tiger is a-lashing of his tail !

Ko-Ko.               Yes, I like to see a tiger  
                     From the Congo or the Niger,  
 And especially when lashing of his tail !

KATISHA. Volcanoes have a splendour that is grim,  
                     And earthquakes only terrify the dolts,  
                     But to him that's scientific  
                     There's nothing that's terrific  
 In the falling of a flight of thunderbolts !

Ko-Ko.               Yes, in spite of all my meekness,  
                     If I have a little weakness,  
 It's a passion for a flight of thunderbolts.

The last literary work of Gilbert's life was the rewriting of the story of *The Mikado* for children, in which there is a new and delightful version of “ The little list ” song :

‘ As some day it may happen that a victim must be found,  
 I've made a little list—I've made a little list  
 Of inconvenient people who might well be underground,  
 For they never would be missed—they never would be missed.  
 The donkey who of nine-times-six and eight-times-seven prates,  
 And stumps you with inquiries on geography and dates,  
 And asks for your ideas on spelling ‘ parallelogram ’—  
 All narrow-minded people who are stingy with their jam,  
 And the torture-dealing dentist, with the forceps in his fist—  
 They'd none of them be missed—they'd none of them be missed.

"There's the nursemaid who each evening in curlpapers does your hair,

With an aggravating twist—*she* never would be missed—  
And tells you that you mustn't cough or sneeze or yawn or stare,  
She never would be missed—I'm sure she'd not be missed.  
All those who hold that children shouldn't have too much to eat,  
And think cold suet pudding a delicious birthday treat,  
Who say that little girls to bed at seven should be sent,  
And consider pocket-money isn't given to be spent,  
And doctors who on giving you unpleasant draughts insist—  
They never would be missed—they'd none of them be missed.

"Then the teacher who for hours keeps you practising your scales

With an ever-aching wrist—*she* never would be missed.  
And children, too, who out of school are fond of telling tales,  
They never would be missed—I'm sure they'd not be missed.  
All people who maintain (in solemn earnest—not in joke)  
That quantities of sugar-plums are bad for little folk,  
And those who hold the principle, unalterably fixed,  
That instruction with amusement should most carefully be mixed;  
All these (and many others) I have placed upon the list,  
For they never would be missed—never, never would be missed."

A letter written by Gilbert to Sullivan on December 9, 1884, illustrates their method of work and the excellent relations that still existed between them:

DEAR SULLIVAN,—

I send a trio for Ko-Ko, Pooh-Bah, and Pish-Tush. I think it ought to be quaint and effective.

I have put the three verses side by side for convenience' sake, but, of course, they will be sung separately.

I fancy the metre admits of each verse being set differently from the others, but I may be wrong in this.

Yours very truly,

W. S. GILBERT

This was, of course, the trio with the refrain "To sit in solemn silence in a dull, dark dock."

In 1907 a revival of *The Mikado* was forbidden, for fear of wounding the susceptibilities of our Japanese allies. Smarting under a sense of injury, Gilbert wrote:

"I suppose you have read that the King (with his unfailing tact) has forbidden that *The Mikado* shall ever be played again. That means at least five thousand pounds out of my pocket. It is so easy

to be tactful when the cost has to be borne by somebody else. The *Mikado* of the opera was an imaginary monarch of a remote period, and cannot by any exercise of ingenuity be taken to be a slap on an existing institution. He has no more actuality than a pantomime king, and it's a poor compliment to the Japs to suppose they would be offended by it. . . . But when tact gets the bit between its teeth, there is no knowing where it will carry you. It is generally supposed that — was invited to Berlin to act by the Kaiser, with the malignant motive of showing the Germans what impostors we all are."

It is satisfactory to know that a few days later Gilbert was much pleased to discover that he had been entirely misinformed:

"I learn from a friend, who had it direct from the King, that the *Japs* made the objection to *The Mikado*, and that it was at their instance it was suppressed. A delicate and polite action on the part of a guest towards a host. The rights in the piece do not revert to me for three years; by that time we shall probably be at war with Japan about India, and they will offer me a high price to permit it to be played. . . . I hear the King is very angry about it, as he was supposed to have done it off his own bat. They are going to do *Iolanthe* at the Savoy, and I hope it will be done better than the others. Mrs. Carte was at the Lord Chamberlain's weeping for two hours on end because they would not let her do *The Mikado*. King Edward's saving sense of humour should surely have secured him against such allegations as this."

Mr. G. K. Chesterton says of *The Mikado*:

"In that play Gilbert pursued and persecuted the evils of modern England till they had literally not a leg to stand on; exactly as Swift did under the allegory of *Gulliver's Travels*. Yet it is the solid and comic fact that *The Mikado* was actually forbidden in England for the first time, because it was a satire on Japan. The cannon had been fired point-blank at us. The cannon-ball simply rebounded. And we were earnestly concerned about whether the cannon would cannon and hit our Gallant Allies. I doubt if there is a single joke in the whole play that fits the Japanese. But all the jokes in the play fit the English, if they would put on the cap. The great creation of the play is Pooh-Bah. I have never heard, I do not believe, that the combination of inconsistent functions is specially a vice of the extreme East. I should guess the contrary; I should guess that the East tends to split into steady and inherited trades or castes; so that the torturer is always a torturer and the priest a priest. But about England Pooh-Bah is something more than a satire; he is the truth. It is true of British politics (probably not of Japanese) that we meet the same

man twenty times as twenty different officials. There is a quarrel between a landlord, Lord Jones, and a railway company presided over by Lord Smith. Strong comments are made on the case by a newspaper (owned by Lord Brown), and after infinite litigation, it is sent up to the House of Lords, that is, Lords Jones, Smith, and Brown. Generally the characters are more mixed. The landlord cannot live by land, but does live as director of the railway. The railway lord is so rich that he buys up the newspaper. The general result can be expressed only in two syllables (to be uttered with the utmost energy of the lungs): Pooh-Bah."

*The Mikado* was followed by *Ruddigore*, which was produced at the Savoy Theatre on January 22, 1887, with the following cast:

## MORTALS

ROBIN OAKAPPLE (a Young Farmer)	. . .	<i>Mr. George Grossmith</i>
RICHARD DAUNTLESS (his Foster-brother, a Man-of-war's-man)	. . . . .	<i>Mr. Durward Lely</i>
SIR DESPARD MURGATROYD (of Ruddigore, a Wicked Baronet)	. . . . .	<i>Mr. Rutland Barrington</i>
OLD ADAM GOODHEART (Robin's faithful servant).	. . . . .	<i>Mr. Rudolph Lewis</i>
ROSE MAYBUD (a Village Maiden)	. . .	<i>Miss Leonora Braham</i>
MAD MARGARET	. . . . .	<i>Miss Jessie Bond</i>
DAME HANNAH (Rose's Aunt)	. . . .	<i>Miss Rosina Brandram</i>
ZORAH	} Professional Bridesmaids . . .	<i>Miss Josephine Findlay</i>
RUTH		<i>Miss Lindsay</i>

## GHOSTS

SIR RUPERT MURGATROYD (the First Baronet)	<i>Mr. Price</i>
SIR JASPER MURGATROYD (the Third Baronet)	<i>Mr. Charles</i>
SIR LIONEL MURGATROYD (the Sixth Baronet)	<i>Mr. Trevor</i>
SIR CONRAD MURGATROYD (the Twelfth Baronet)	<i>Mr. Burbank</i>
SIR DESMOND MURGATROYD (the Sixteenth Baronet)	. . . . . <i>Mr. Tuer</i>
SIR GILBERT MURGATROYD (the Eighteenth Baronet)	. . . . . <i>Mr. Wilbraham</i>
SIR MERVYN MURGATROYD (the Twentieth Baronet)	. . . . . <i>Mr. Cox</i>
SIR RODERIC MURGATROYD (the Twenty-first Baronet)	. . . . . <i>Mr. Richard Temple</i>

The plot was derived from *Ages Ago*, a sketch written many years before for the German Reeds, which contained a scene of pictures of ancestors stepping from their frames. The

famous duet, "I know a youth who loves a little maid," can obviously be traced back to the *Bab Ballad*, *The Modest Couple*. Peter and Sarah were betrothed when they were very young :

"They blushed, and flushed, and fainted till they reached the age  
of nine,

When PETER's good papa (he was a Baron of the Rhine)  
Determined to endeavour some sound argument to find  
To bring these shy young people to a proper frame of mind.

"He told them that as SARAH was to be his PETER's bride,  
They might at least consent to sit at table side by side;  
He begged that they would now and then shake hands, till he was  
hoarse,  
Which SARAH thought indelicate, and PETER very coarse."

The "Ghost" song had its forerunner, too, in one of the *Fun* ballads not included in the published volumes :

"Fair phantom, come !  
The moon's awake.  
The owl hoots gaily from its brake,  
The blithesome bat's a-wing.  
Come, soar to yonder silent clouds,  
The other teems with peopled shrouds :  
We'll fly the lightsome spectre crowds,  
Thou cloudy, clammy thing !"

Some exception was taken in the Press to the title of *Ruddigore*, and Gilbert wrote to a friend :

"When the Press shuddered with horror, as it did, at the title, I endeavoured to induce my collaborator to consent to the title being changed to "Kensington Gore, or Robin and Richard were Two Pretty Men." But Sullivan wouldn't consent."

*Ruddigore* is a burlesque of transpontine melodrama, with its bold, bad baronet, its gallant sailor, and its artless village maiden who describes herself as "Sweet Rose Maybud." Rose was a foundling :

"Hung in a plated dish-cover to the knocker of the workhouse door, with naught that I could call my own, save a change of baby-linen and a book of etiquette, little wonder if I have always regarded that work as a voice from a parent's tomb. This hallowed volume (*producing a book of etiquette*), composed, if I may believe the title-page,



by no less an authority than the wife of a Lord Mayor, has been, through life, my guide and monitor."

We have referred to the sailor's song with its humorous baiting of popular patriotism. The song of the Modest Man is deliciously Gilbertian :

"As a poet, I'm tender and quaint—  
 I've passion and fervour and grace—  
 From Ovid to Horace,  
 To Swinburne and Morris,  
 They all of them take a back place.  
 Then I sing and I play and I paint :  
 Though none are accomplished as I,  
 To say so were treason :  
 You ask me the reason ?  
 I'm diffident, modest and shy."

Gilbert took his usual meticulous care with the pictures which come to life. They were specially painted and were accurately copied from the members of the company whom they represented. Similar care was taken with the uniforms worn by the chorus in the first act, which represented no less than twenty different regiments. The accuracy of military detail was vouched for by the Quartermaster-General, who specially attended the dress rehearsal.

The dialogue after the pictures have come to life is ingeniously amusing :

ROBIN. I recognize you now, you are the picture that hangs at the end of the gallery,

SIR RODERIC. In a bad light. I am.

ROBIN. Are you considered a good likeness ?

SIR RODERIC. Pretty well. Flattering.

ROBIN. Because, as a work of art, you are poor.

SIR RODERIC. I am crude in colour, but I have only been painted ten years. In a couple of centuries I shall be an Old Master, and then you will be sorry you spoke lightly of me.

Robin's song after he has been condemned to a life of crime is characterized by Gilbert's unfailing fertility in rhyming :

"Henceforth all the crimes that I find in the *Times*  
 I've promised to perpetrate daily ;

To-morrow I start, with a petrified heart,  
On a regular course of Old Bailey.  
There's confidence tricking, bad coin, pocket-picking,  
And several other disgraces—  
There's postage stamp priggings, and the thimble-rigging,  
The three-card delusion at races!  
Oh! a Baronet's rank is exceedingly nice,  
But the title's uncommonly dear at the price!"

And the duet, "I am a very abandoned person," is perhaps the best joke in the play.

Gilbert's favourites among his operas were *The Yeomen of the Guard*, *Ruddigore*, and *Utopia, Limited*; and after some years of neglect, *Ruddigore* now stands high in popular favour. It is humorous, ingenious, and admirably constructed, and the score is Sullivan in his richest and most varied mood. *Ruddigore* ran for two hundred and eighty-eight performances, and has often been described as one of the few Gilbert and Sullivan failures. But Gilbert publicly announced that the eight months' run put £7,000 into his pocket, and many other dramatists would be glad of such failures.

On the day after the production, Gilbert wrote:

DEAR SULLIVAN,—

I can't help thinking that the second act would be greatly improved if the recitation before Grossmith's song were omitted, and the song reset to an air that would admit of his singing it desperately—almost in a passion—the torrent of which would take him off the stage at the end. After the long and solemn ghost scene, I fancy a lachrymose song is out of place, particularly as it is followed by another slow number—the duet between Jessie and Barrington. I feel this so strongly that I send this by hand, so that if you are of my opinion the matter could be put in hand at once, and perhaps sung on Wednesday next. The *Observer* is kindly.

Yours truly,

W. S. GILBERT

P.S.—I will call and talk it over this afternoon at three if you like.

Mr. Archer has an amusing comment on the long line of bad baronets in *Ruddigore*. He says that, according to the conventions of drama, baronets were villains in the nineteenth century, but they were respectable in the eighteenth

century, and blackguards who thought themselves fine fellows in the seventeenth.

*The Yeomen of the Guard* was produced at the Savoy on October 3, 1888, with the following cast :

SIR RICHARD CHOLMONDELEY (Lieutenant of the Tower) . . . . .	<i>Mr. W. Brownlow</i>
COLONEL FAIRFAX (under sentence of death)	<i>Mr. Courtois Pounds</i>
SERGEANT MERYLL (of the Yeomen of the Guard) . . . . .	<i>Mr. Richard Temple</i>
LEONARD MERYLL (his Son) . . . . .	<i>Mr. W. R. Shirley</i>
JACK POINT (a Strolling Jester) . . . . .	<i>Mr. George Grossmith</i>
WILFRED SHADBOLT (Head Jailor and Assistant Tormentor) . . . . .	<i>Mr. W. H. Denny</i>
THE HEADSMAN . . . . .	<i>Mr. Richards</i>
FIRST YEOMAN . . . . .	<i>Mr. Wilbraham</i>
SECOND YEOMAN . . . . .	<i>Mr. Medcalfe</i>
THIRD YEOMAN . . . . .	<i>Mr. Merton</i>
FOURTH YEOMAN . . . . .	<i>Mr. Rudolph Lewis</i>
FIRST CITIZEN . . . . .	<i>Mr. Redmond</i>
SECOND CITIZEN . . . . .	<i>Mr. Boyd</i>
ELSIE MAYNARD (a Strolling Singer) . . . . .	<i>Miss Geraldine Ulmar</i>
PHOEBE MERYLL (Sergeant Meryll's Daughter) . . . . .	<i>Miss Jessie Bond</i>
DAME CARRUTHERS (Housekeeper to the Tower) . . . . .	<i>Miss Rosina Brandram</i>
KATE (her Niece) . . . . .	<i>Miss Rose Hervey</i>

There can, we feel, be no question that with this opera the achievement of the collaborators reached its highest point.

"I thought," said Gilbert, "'The Yeomen' was the best thing we had done"—and he was right: the best thing they had done or were ever to do—a perfect work of art.

Gilbert was once asked what gave him the idea of "*The Yeomen*," and he said that, while waiting for a train on a railway platform one day, he noticed a poster of a beefeater advertising the Tower Furnishing Company, and this set him thinking and devising, and the result was *The Merryman and His Maid*.

The evolution of the idea is indicated in two letters written to Sullivan :

DEAR S.,—

I have got the plot of the new piece pretty well combed out, and I'm glad to hear you can dine with us on Wednesday, as we can go carefully into the matter after dinner. It is quite a consistent and effective story, without anachronisms or pathos of any kind, and I hope you will like it.

Yours very truly,  
W. S. GILBERT

September 13, 1888.

DEAR SULLIVAN,—

The more I think of it, the more convinced I am that "The Beef-eaters" is the name for the new piece. It is a good, sturdy, solid name, conjuring up picturesque associations and clearly telling its own tale at once. "The Tower" is nothing. No one knows but a few that beefeaters were called Tower Warders. I put the two names before Hare without comment and asked him which he preferred, and he said "'The Beefeaters' by all means." This is for what it is worth.

Very truly yours,  
W. S. GILBERT

There can be no sort of doubt that *The Yeomen of the Guard* is a far better title still.

Talking to Mr. William Archer of *The Yeomen of the Guard*, Gilbert gave some interesting details of the method of his collaboration with Sir Arthur Sullivan:

The verse always preceded the music, or even any hint of it. Sometimes—very rarely—Sullivan would say of some song I had given him, "My dear fellow, I can't make anything of this"—and then I would rewrite it entirely—never tinker at it. But, of course, I don't mean to say that I "invented" all the rhythms and stanzas in the operas. Often a rhythm would be suggested by some old tune or other running in my head, and I would fit my words to it more or less exactly. When Sullivan knew I had done so, he would say, "Don't tell me what the tune is, or I shan't be able to get it out of my head." But once, I remember, I did tell him. There is a duet in *The Yeomen of the Guard* beginning:

"I have a song to sing, O!  
Sing me your song, O!"

It was suggested to me by an old chantey I used to hear the sailors on board my yacht singing in the "dog-watch" on Saturday evenings, beginning:

“Come, and I will sing to you—  
 What will you sing me?  
 I will sing you one, O!  
 What is your one, O!”

And so on. Well, when I gave Sullivan the words of the duet, he found the utmost difficulty in setting it. He tried hard for a fortnight, but in vain. I offered to recast it in another mould, but he expressed himself so delighted with it in its then form that he was determined to work it out to a satisfactory issue. At last, he came to me and said: “You often have some old air in your mind which prompts the metre of your songs; if anything prompted you in this one, hum it to me—it may help me.” Only a rash man ever asks me to hum, but the situation was desperate, and I did my best to convey to him the air of the chantey that had suggested the song to me. I was so far successful that before I had hummed a dozen bars he exclaimed: “That will do—I’ve got it!” And in an hour he produced the charming air as it appears in the opera. I have sometimes thought that he exclaimed “That will do—I’ve got it” because my humming was more than he could bear; but he always assured me that it had given him the necessary clue to the proper setting of the song. . . .

I remember it (the chantey) as my sailors used to sing it. I found out afterwards that it was a very much corrupted form of an old Cornish carol. This was their version of it:

FIRST VOICE. Come, and I will sing you—  
 ALL. What will you sing me?  
 FIRST VOICE. I will sing you one, O!  
 ALL. What is your one, O!  
 FIRST VOICE. One of them is all alone,  
 And ever will remain so.  
 ALL. One of them, etc.  
 SECOND VOICE. Come, and I will sing you—  
 ALL. What will you sing me?  
 SECOND VOICE. I will sing you two, O!  
 ALL. What is your two, O!  
 SECOND VOICE. Two of them are lilywhite maids,  
 Dressed all in green, O!  
 ALL. One of them is all alone,  
 And ever will remain so.  
 THIRD VOICE. Come, and I will sing you—  
 ALL. What will you sing me?  
 THIRD VOICE. I will sing you three, O!  
 ALL. What is your three, O!  
 THIRD VOICE. Three of them are strangers.

ALL. Two of them are lilywhite maids,  
Dressed all in green, O!  
One of them is all alone,  
And ever will remain so!

And so on until twelve is reached.

THIRD VOICE. Come, and I will sing you—  
ALL. What will you sing me?  
THIRD VOICE. I will sing you twelve, O!  
ALL. What is your twelve, O!  
THIRD VOICE. Twelve are the twelve apostles,  
ALL. Eleven of them have gone to heaven.  
Ten are the Ten Commandments,  
Nine is the moonlight bright and clear,  
Eight are the eight archangels,  
Seven are the seven stars in the sky,  
Six are the cheerful waiters (!)  
Five are the ferrymen in the boats,  
Four are the gospel preachers,  
Three of them are strangers,  
Two of them are lilywhite maids,  
Dressed all in green, O;  
One of them is all alone,  
And ever will remain so!

Gilbert always professed that he knew nothing about music, and he had little ear for tune; but he had a wonderful ear for rhythm, and he was by no means without musical appreciation. One of his Harrow Weald friends tells us of his particular liking for Mozart—a striking instance of taste, because of the Mozartian qualities of Sullivan at his best. In a letter written to Sullivan in 1893, Gilbert said:

“I am much flattered, and indeed touched, by your assumption that the ‘piece’ of music you jotted down in your note would convey any idea to me that an inscription would not.”

In *The Yeomen of the Guard* Gilbert deserted, or almost deserted, his own land of topsy-turvydom. There is a good deal of himself in Jack Point, with his “jest and joke, and quip and crank,” and Phoebe Meryll is perhaps the most fascinating and human character he ever created:

"The rose's sigh  
Were as a carrion's cry  
To lullaby  
Such as I'd sing to thee,  
Were I thy bride!"

"A feather's press  
Were leaden heaviness  
To my caress.  
But then, of course, you see  
I'm not thy bride!"

Gilbert is quite serious in Dame Carruthers' "Song of the Tower":

"When our gallant Norman foes  
Made our merry land their own,  
And the Saxons from the Conqueror were flying,  
At his bidding it arose;  
In its panoply of stone,  
A sentinel unliving and undying.  
Insensible, I trow,  
As a sentinel should be,  
Though a queen to save her head should come a-suing,  
There's a legend on its brow  
That is eloquent to me,  
And it tells of duty done and duty doing.

"The screw may twist and the rack may burn,  
And men may bleed and men may burn,  
On London town and all its hoard  
I keep my solemn watch and ward!"

Once more he is the modern Herrick in his "Is Life a Boon!" He is delicately dainty in the duet, "I have a song to sing," and pathetically ironic in the Jester's song:

"Though your head may rack with a bilious attack,  
And your sense with toothache you're losing,  
Don't be mopy and flat—they don't fine you for that,  
If you're properly quaint and amusing!"

"Though your wife ran away with a soldier that day,  
And took with her your trifle of money;  
Bless your heart, they don't mind—they're exceedingly kind,  
They don't blame you—as long as you're funny!"

It's a comfort to feel  
 If your partner should flit,  
 Though you suffer a deal,  
 They don't mind it a bit—  
 They don't blame you—so long as you're funny."

This is the often repeated bitter cry of the humorist, who, once having been successfully funny, must willy-nilly go on being funny until the end of his days. It was a fate against which Gilbert himself rebelled, and if *Jack Point* is autobiographical, he is autobiography with more than a suggestion of bitterness.

*The Gondoliers* was produced at the Savoy Theatre on December 7, 1889. Mr. George Grossmith left the company after *The Yeomen of the Guard*, and it was joined by Mr. Frank Wyatt and Miss Decima Moore, who made her first stage appearance in the part of Casilda. The following is the cast :

THE DUKE OF PLAZA-TORO (a Grandee of Spain)	Mr. Frank Wyatt
LUIZ (his Attendant)	Mr. Brownlow
DON ALHAMBRA DEL BOLERO (the Grand Inquisitor)	Mr. Denny
MARCO PALMIER	Mr. Courtice Pounds
GIUSEPPE PALMIERI	Mr. Ruiland Barrington
ANTONIO	Mr. Medcalf
FRANCESCO	Mr. Rose
GIORGIO	Mr. De Pledge
ANNIBALE	Mr. Wilbraham
OTTAVIO	Mr. C. Gilbert
THE DUCHESS OF PLAZA-TORO	Miss Rosina Brandram
CASILDA (her Daughter)	Miss Decima Moore
GIANETTA	Miss Geraldine Ulmar
TESSA	Miss Jessie Bond
FIAMETTA	Miss Lawrence
VITTORIA	Miss Cole
GIULIA	Miss Phyllis
INEZ (the King's Foster-mother)	Miss Bernard

*The Gondoliers* was a return to the topsy-turvydom which Gilbert had more or less deserted for the moment in *The Yeomen of the Guard*. It took Gilbert five months to write the libretto of *The Gondoliers*, and Sullivan confessed that



the score had given him more trouble than any of its predecessors.

The "book" was discussed in a series of letters to Sullivan. Gilbert wrote on August 10, 1889:

DEAR SULLIVAN,—

I certainly did not understand that the "Growling" chorus was cut out. It seems to me that the piece as it stands at present wants it. The Venetians of the fifteenth century were red-hot Republicans. One of their party is made king and invites his friends to form a Court. They object because they are Republicans. He replies that he has considered that and proposed to institute a Court in which all people shall be equal, and to this they agree. In Act II the absurdity of this state of things is shown. Without the dissatisfaction expressed by the "Growling" chorus (which can be rewritten if it won't do in its present form) the story would be unintelligible.

Yours very truly,  
W. S. GILBERT

In a letter dated August 31, 1889, he says:

DEAR S.,—

Here is the entry of the Duke and Duchess. I fancy you will like the spirit of it. Would you like a short episodic aria for Carlotta introduced into it? If so, it can be done. Or a duet for Carlotta and Luiz (aside). Luiz is not on, as at present arranged, but I could bring him on if you wanted him.

Yours very truly,  
W. S. G.

At the end of September he wrote:

DEAR SULLIVAN,—

Will you send me a copy of the ensemble, "In a contemplative fashion," as I haven't kept one, then I will alter it at once. I have practically finished the lyrics of Act II—subject, of course, to alterations—and possibly to one or two additions—but that I cannot tell until the dialogue is written. It appears to me to be rather lacking in solo songs, and there are a good many duos, trios, quintets, etc. Perhaps that is an advantage, perhaps it isn't.

Yours very truly,  
W. S. GILBERT

Perhaps I had better leave the absolute end of Act I until I see you. I have done something that might do.

On September 12, 1889, he wrote :

DEAR S.,—

Will this do ? It is dactylic, but it is difficult to get the contrast you want without dactyls. Probably it will be impracticable to set the accompanying lines, "In a contemplative fashion," so as to be a running accompaniment to the verses as they now stand. If so, I suppose they could be omitted during the verses and introduced at the end to finish with. If the verses won't do, send them back and I'll try again.

Yours very truly,  
W. S. GILBERT

Gilbert wrote on September 22, 1889 :

DEAR S.,—

I have altered "In a contemplative fashion" as suggested. The only question is whether the two last verses which the two girls sing at each other, and with which the two men have nothing to do, wouldn't be better in the original flowing metre, as lending itself to the volubility of two angry girls. I don't care a pin myself, which it is, but I thought you might find the original dactylic metre better for the purpose. Here it is in both forms.

Yours very truly,  
W. S. GILBERT

In a letter dated October 11, 1899, he said :

DEAR SULLIVAN,—

I didn't want to bother you while you were away, so I have worked at the piece myself, taking my chance of your finding it all right or otherwise. I have now finished it, subject, of course, to any alterations you may require, and it is set up in type that you may see and judge of it in a concrete form. I have found it necessary to make a few alterations and modifications, but none of them, I think and hope, will give you any trouble. I have written a nice little ballad for Pounds in Act I (he had no ballad), and a good rattling song for Barrington. I found that Denny had two songs in Act II, so I have taken a song from Denny ("Now I'm about to kiss your hand") and transferred it to Wyatt. I could not consult you about this, as you were busy at Leeds, so have done it on the chance of your agreeing to it. If you don't, it can be restored to Denny. I have also done without Brandram's song, "In the days when I was wedded," because it stopped the action of the piece (already too long), and I didn't think it was the kind of song that would show her off effectively. However, it can easily be restored if you like. I have rewritten Wyatt's song, "From the country of the Cid," and I think it is greatly improved; but if you prefer the original, it can be restored, as the situation in

## 114 W. S. GILBERT: HIS LIFE AND LETTERS

which it occurs is unaltered. I have also inserted a brief passage for Carlotta in Act II. This is, I think, the sum and substance of the alterations. Oh—there is one more—I have altered the nurse's song at the end of the piece to eight lines of recitatif: firstly, because I thought the audience wouldn't care for a set ballad from a stranger at the end of the piece; and secondly, because the situation became too like the situation at the end of *Pinafore*, where little Buttercup explains she has changed the children at birth. So, you see, I have not been idle since you left. . . .

I find it simply impossible to bring the Duke, Duchess, and Luiz in at the end of Act I without entirely reconstructing the piece. I think you will find it all right without them. I find I can do without the National Anthem ("As long as you are good as gold"), so if you don't want it, it can go overboard.

Yours always truly,  
W. S. GILBERT

The "brief passage for Carlotta," who, by the way, became Casilda when the opera was produced, was cut out, as were the songs "The country of the Cid" and "Now I'm about to kiss your hand." The latter, however, appeared in a quintet, in which the Duke sings:

"I am a courtier grave and serious  
Who is about to kiss your hand:  
Try to combine a pose imperious  
With a demeanour noble, bland."

On October 25, 1889, Gilbert wrote:

DEAR S.,—

I send you herewith the corrected proof of the piece. I very much want to rewrite "Now I'm about to kiss your hand," making it more musically rhythmical and ending with a minuet for Wyatt and Barrington. The words can easily be made to excuse and account for this:

1st V. Now I'm about to kiss your hand, etc.

2nd V. Now walk about with stately tread.

3rd V. Now learn to dance the minuet—

or something of that kind. Wyatt and Barrington are both such excellent dancers that it seems a pity to miss so good a chance of utilizing them. What do you think? Pounds could accompany them on a mandolin—play the dance music, I mean.

Yours very truly,  
W. S. GILBERT

The number eventually became a quintet, and instead of a minuet a gavotte was danced :

“ Now a gavotte perform sedately,  
Offer your hand with conscious pride ;  
Take an attitude not too stately,  
Still sufficiently dignified.”

On November 9, 1889, Gilbert wrote :

DEAR SULLIVAN,—

If I remember right, you expressed some doubt as to whether Gianetta's song, “ Kind, sir, you cannot have the heart,” was not too long for the situation, and said something about cutting it down to one verse. This was some time ago, and perhaps you are no longer of the same opinion. I have come across a song which I wrote for the same situation, and which perhaps presents better opportunities for acting than the other. Anyhow, I enclose it for your information. If you don't like it, tear it up. Or if you want the original song shortened, could it be done by taking the second half of the first verse and the first half of the second verse ? Don't trouble to answer this.

Yours very truly,  
W. S. GILBERT

The song was, however, left in its original form.

Venice is the scene of the opera, and the plot turns on the old device of changelings, which Gilbert had used several times before. In none of the operas was Gilbert more painstakingly careful with the stage-management. In the second act there is a game of blind-man's buff, in which the two Gondoliers catch their own brides, and Gilbert rehearsed the Savoy Company in this short scene for three whole days before he was satisfied.

*The Gondoliers* ran for 554 consecutive performances, earning more money than any other of the Savoy operas. When the score was published by Messrs. Chappell, 20,000 copies were sold on publication, and over 70,000 copies of various arrangements within a few days.

*The Gondoliers* is a satire on snobbery—the snobbery of the courtier for whom a queen can do no wrong :

“ And noble lords will scrape and bow,  
 And double them into two,  
 And open their eyes,  
 In blank surprise,  
 At whatever she likes to do.  
 And everybody will roundly vow  
 She’s fair as flowers in May,  
 And say ‘ How clever ! ’  
 At whatsoever  
 She condescends to say !

“ Oh ! ’tis a glorious thing, I ween,  
 To be a regular Royal Queen !  
 No half-and-half affair, I mean,  
 But a right-down regular Queen ! ”

And the corresponding snobbery of the clamourer for equality :

“ For every one who feels inclined,  
 Some post we undertake to find  
 Congenial with his peace of mind—  
 And all shall equal be !

“ The Chancellor in his peruke,  
 The Earl, the Marquis, and the Dook,  
 The Groom, the Butler, and the Cook—  
 They all shall equal be !

“ The Aristocrat who banks with Coutts,  
 The Aristocrat who hunts and shoots,  
 The Aristocrat who cleans our boots—  
 They all shall equal be !

“ The Noble Lord who rules the State,  
 The Noble Lord who cleans the plate,  
 The Noble Lord who scrubs the grate—  
 They all shall equal be !

“ The Lord High Bishop of Orthodox,  
 The Lord High Coachman on the box,  
 The Lord High Vagabond in the stocks—  
 They all shall equal be ! ”

*The Gondoliers* has its full measure of songs that nowadays  
 “ every fellow knows ”—*Take a pair of sparkling eyes, Of that*

*there is no manner of doubt, When a merry maiden marries, The workaday monarch, and that perfect comic song :*

“ When everybody’s somebodee,  
Then no one’s anybody.”

Gilbert is at his satirical best in the duet in which the Duke and Duchess describe the methods by which needy aristocrats may contrive to earn a living :

- DUKE. Those pressing prevailers,  
The ready-made tailors,  
Quote me as their great double-barrel—
- DUCHESS. Their great double-barrel.
- DUKE. I allow them to do so,  
Though Robinson Crusoe  
Would jib at their wearing apparel !
- DUCHESS. Such wearing apparel !
- DUKE. I sit, by selection,  
Upon the direction  
Of several Companies’ bubble—
- DUCHESS. All Companies’ bubble !
- DUKE. As soon as they’re floated  
I’m freely bank-noted—  
I’m pretty well paid for my trouble !
- DUCHESS. He’s paid for his trouble !
- DUCHESS. At middle-class party  
I play at *ecarté*—  
And I’m by no means a beginner—
- DUKE (*significantly*). She’s not a beginner.
- DUCHESS. To one of my station  
The remuneration—  
Five guineas a night and my dinner.
- DUKE. And wine with her dinner.
- DUCHESS. I write letters blatant  
On medicine patent—  
And use any other you mustn’t—
- DUKE. Believe me, you mustn’t—
- DUCHESS. And vow my complexion  
Derives its perfection  
From somebody’s soap—which it doesn’t.

There is dainty and ingenious burlesque of conventional comic opera in the duet sung by the two Gondoliers in the beginning of the play :

" When morning is breaking,  
Our couches forsaking,  
To greet their awaking,  
With carols we come.

" At summer day's nooning,  
When weary lagooning,  
Our mandolines tuning  
We lazily thrum.

' When vespers are ringing,  
To hope ever clinging,  
With songs of our singing,  
A vigil we keep.

" When daylight is fading,  
Enwrapt in night's shading,  
With soft serenading,  
We lull them to sleep."

The opera does not, perhaps, contain any of the more distinctive essays of Gilbert the wistful poet, though there certainly is charm in :

" Dead as the last year's leaves—  
As gathered flowers—ah, woe is me !  
Dead as the garnered sheaves  
That love of ours—ah, woe is me !  
Born but to fade and die  
When hope was high,  
Dead and as far away  
As yesterday—ah, woe is me ! "

Nowhere has Gilbert summed up his own philosophy more completely than in the lines of the quintet :

" Try we life-long, we can never  
Straighten out life's tangled skein,  
Why should we, in vain endeavour,  
Guess and guess and guess again ?  
Life's a pudding full of plums,  
Care's a canker that benumbs.  
Wherefore waste our elocution  
On impossible solution ?  
Life's a pleasant institution,  
Let us take it as it comes !

“Set aside the dull enigma,  
We shall guess it all too soon,  
Failure brings no kind of stigma—  
Dance we to another tune!  
“String the lyre and fill the cup,  
Lest on sorrow we should sup.  
Hop and skip to Fancy’s fiddle,  
Hands across and down the middle—  
Life’s perhaps the only riddle,  
That we shrink from giving up!”

In March, 1891, a special performance of *The Gondoliers* was given in the Waterloo Chamber at Windsor Castle, the first theatrical performance held there since the death of the Prince Consort. Queen Victoria was, of course, present at the performance, which was attended by many of the Royal family, including the recently widowed Empress of Germany. It is recorded that Queen Victoria was delighted with the opera, and was particularly amused by the song:

“Oh, philosophers may sing  
Of the troubles of a king;  
Yet the duties are delightful and the privileges great;  
But the privilege and pleasure  
That we treasure beyond measure  
Is to run on little errands for the Minister of State.”

By a curious and surely unintentional oversight, Gilbert’s name was not on the royal programme, the opera being described as “by Sir Arthur Sullivan.”

In 1896, when Gilbert was staying in Venice, the gondoliers of the city serenaded him as a recognition of the fact that he had used their name in one of the most successful of his operas.

The morning after the production of *The Gondoliers*, Gilbert said in a letter to Sullivan:

“I must again thank you for the magnificent work you have put into the piece. It gives one the chance of shining right through the twentieth century with a reflected light.”

During the run of *The Gondoliers*, the partnership of Gilbert,



Sullivan, and D'Oyly Carte, which had lasted for fourteen years, and had produced ten operas, came to a temporary end. It had lasted so long that it was in itself something of a miracle, for theatrical partnerships are generally short-lived, and artistic collaborators are beset with colossal difficulties. It is sufficient to say here that the original cause of the trouble was a difference of opinion between Gilbert and D'Oyly Carte concerning an item of expenditure, and Sullivan, apparently with some hesitation, and certainly with dislike, sided with D'Oyly Carte against the author of his librettos. There has been so much ill-informed talk about Gilbert's jealousy and his lack of appreciation, that we have in this chapter quoted at length from the letters he wrote to Sullivan during the rehearsals of *The Gondoliers*. From them it is obvious that Gilbert was always ready to listen to suggestions and to make all the alterations that Sullivan desired, and that he had the fullest appreciation of Sullivan's genius and of the great part his music had played in winning for Savoy opera its unparalleled popularity.

The relations between the two men are made still more clear in a letter written by Gilbert on February 20, 1889, shortly before the opening of the Palace Theatre by D'Oyly Carte with the production of Sullivan's grand opera *Ivanhoe*. Sullivan had obviously suggested to Gilbert that he should himself provide the serious libretto, and the following letter was his reply:

DEAR S.,—

I have thought carefully over your letter. I quite understand and sympathize with your desire to write what, for want of a better term, I suppose we must call Grand Opera. I cannot believe that it would succeed either at the Savoy or at Carte's new theatre, unless a much more powerful singing and acting company were got together than the company we now control. Moreover, to speak from my own selfish point of view, such an opera would afford me no chance of doing what I best do. The librettist of a grand opera is always swamped in the composer. Anybody—Hersee, Farnie, Reece—can write a good enough libretto for such a purpose. Personally, I should be lost in it. Again, the success of *The Yeomen*, which is a stage in the direc-

tion of serious opera, has not been so convincing as to warrant us in assuming that the public wants something more earnest still. There is no doubt about it that the more reckless and irresponsible the libretto has been, the better the piece has succeeded. The pieces that have succeeded least have been those in which a consistent story has been more or less consistently followed out. Personally, I prefer a consistent subject. Such a subject as *The Yeomen* is far more congenial to my taste than the burlesquerie of *Iolanthe* or *The Mikado*, but I think we should be risking everything in writing more seriously still. We have a name jointly for humorous work tempered with occasional glimpses of earnest drama. I think we should do unwisely if we left altogether the path we have trodden together so long and so successfully. I can quite understand your desire to write a big work. Well, why not write one? But why abandon the Savoy business? Cannot the two things be done concurrently? If you can write an oratorio like *The Martyr of Antioch* while you are occupied with pieces like *Patience* and *Iolanthe*, cannot you write a grand opera without giving up pieces like *The Yeomen*? Are the two things irreconcilable?

As to leaving the Savoy, I can only say that I should do so with the profoundest reluctance and regret. I don't believe in Carte's new theatre. The site is not popular, and cannot become popular for some years to come. Our names are known all over the world in connection with the Savoy, and I feel convinced that it would be madness to sever the connection with that theatre. If you don't care to write any more pieces of the "Yeomen" order, well and good. But before launching on grand opera, remember how difficult we found it to get effective singers and actors for the pieces we have already done. Where in God's name is your grand opera soprano who can act to be found?

From me the Press and the public will take nothing but what is in essence humorous. The best serious librettist of the day is Julian Sturgis. Why not write a grand opera with him? My work in that direction would be deservedly or otherwise poo-poo'd.

Yours very truly,

W. S. GILBERT

Gilbert was justified in his prophecy that a grand opera at a new theatre would be nothing more than a partial success. This letter is important not only because it shows the cordial terms which existed between him and Sullivan just before the unfortunate breach, but also because it again accents the fact that he himself did not quite understand his own genius. It was when Gilbert was "reckless and irresponsible" that he was so supremely great. In 1880, Gilbert did, as a matter

of fact, write the libretto for Sullivan's *The Martyr of Antioch*, which was produced at the Leeds Festival of that year, and in a letter written to Sullivan he says: "It most certainly never occurred to me to look for any other reward than the honour of being associated, however remotely and unworthily, in a success which I suppose will endure till music itself shall die. Pray believe that of the many substantial advantages that have resulted to me from our association, this last is, and always will be, the most highly prized."

Again, in 1886, Gilbert wrote:

"I congratulate you heartily on the success of the cantata, which appears from all accounts to be the biggest thing you've done."

Nothing more need be said to prove, what is the obvious and first duty of the biographer to prove, that W. S. Gilbert was capable of the most generous appreciation, that the success of the Gilbert and Sullivan collaboration was largely due to his readiness to listen and to change, and that while he had unquestionably a proper idea of the merit of his own work, he never undervalued the work of his collaborator.

Happily, after some time, the differences were smoothed over, and on October 7, 1893, Gilbert and Sullivan were again together at the Savoy with the production of *Utopia Limited*. During the interval, Gilbert's *The Mountebanks* had been produced at the Lyric Theatre, but to that opera we shall refer in a succeeding chapter. In the months immediately preceding the production of *Utopia Limited*, the relations between author and composer were once more cordial and friendly. On July 27, 1893, Gilbert wrote, in the middle of an attack of gout:

Thanks for your letter. Don't trouble to go into the matter at present. I shall be back by the 10th, and we can talk over the matter when we meet. So far, I am worse rather than better. My right foot, which I call Labouchère, is very troublesome, and I take a vicious pleasure (not unalloyed with pain) in cramming him into a boot which is much too small for him. My left foot (known in Homburg as Clement Scott) is a milder nuisance, but still tiresome, and would hurt me a good deal if he could.

On August 7, Gilbert wrote from Homburg :

MY DEAR S.,—

I certainly shall not say that you ought to have foreseen the difficulties in Act II. It would have been simply impossible to detect them in a single hearing. I quite understand that it is only when you begin to tackle the numbers that you discover what is really wanting. I shall, of course, be glad to have your suggestions. I have no doubt I shall find them very valuable, and I shall do my best to embody them. I confess I don't see how Act II can be materially shortened without spoiling the construction or the parts, but if you do, I dare say it can be done. Perhaps the duet (Scaphio and Phantis) could be omitted, but all the others seem to tell the story. As I said before, I will do my best to carry out your suggestions, which are always valuable. Of course, the sextet will be omitted, and I propose to omit the nigger dialogue.

Yours very truly,

W. S. GILBERT

The duet to which Gilbert refers, "With fury deep we burn," was, after all, left in the score.

On September 26, Gilbert wrote :

DEAR St.—

I got up at seven this morning and polished off the new finale before breakfast. It is mere doggerel, but words written to an existing tune are nearly sure to be that. I am sorry to lose the other finale, but I quite see your difficulty and that it can't be helped. You can chop this about just as you please—a verse to Zara and a verse to the King, or the first half of each to Zara and the last half to the King, or the first half of the verse to Zara and the first half of the second verse to Fitzbattleaxe, giving the King the end of each verse, which perhaps is the arrangement that will suit you best.

Yours very truly,

W. S. GILBERT

From this letter it is clear that so eager was Gilbert to make things easy for Sullivan, that he was willing to give up the usual and proper custom of the words first and the music afterwards, and to write badly to suit the tune. The actual verse is :

"Oh, may we copy all your maxims wise,  
And imitate her virtues and her charities,  
And may we, by degrees, acclimatize  
Her Parliamentary peculiarities !

By doing so, we shall, in course of time,  
 Regenerate completely our entire land—  
 Great Britain is that monarchy sublime,  
 To which some add (but others do not) Ireland."

The original cast of *Utopia Limited* was as follows :

KING PARAMOUNT THE FIRST (King of Utopia)	Mr. Rutland Barrington
SCAPHIO } Judges of the Utopian Supreme Court	{ Mr. W. H. Denny
PHANTIS }	{ Mr. John Le Hay
TARARA (the Public Exploder)	Mr. Walter Passmore
CALYNX (the Utopian Vice-Chamberlain)	Mr. Bowden Haswell

#### IMPORTED FLOWERS OF PROGRESS

LORD DRAMALEIGH (a British Lord Chamberlain)	Mr. Scott Russell
CAPTAIN FITZBATTLEAXE (First Life Guards)	Mr. Charles Kenningham
CAPTAIN SIR EDWARD CORCORAN, K.C.B. (of the Royal Navy)	Mr. Lawrence Gridley
MR. GOLDBURY (a Company Promoter afterwards Comptroller of the Utopian Household)	Mr. Scott Fishe
SIR BAILEY BARRE, Q.C., M.P.	Mr. Enes Blackmore
MR. BLUSHINGTON (of the County Council)	Mr. Herbert Ralland
THE PRINCESS ZARA (Eldest Daughter of King Paramount)	Miss Nancy McIntosh
THE PRINCESS NEKAYA } Her Younger Sisters	{ Miss Emmie Owen
THE PRINCESS KALYBA }	{ Miss Florence Perry
THE LADY SOPHY (their English Gouvernante)	Miss Rosina Brandram
SALATA }	{ Miss Edith Johnston
MELENE } Utopian Maidens	{ Miss May Bell
PHYLLA }	{ Miss Florence Easton

Miss Nancy McIntosh made her first appearance in this production. Mr. Percy Fitzgerald says of Miss McIntosh's debut :

"One of the most surprising and interesting features of this rehearsal was the perfect self-possession of the heroine, who went through all the complicated passages of her rôle as though perfectly familiar with the boards. After a long experience of the stage, I may say that I have never seen anything that approached this *tour de force*."

*Utopia Limited* is a satire of contemporary English life, of the England that Gilbert loved so well that he could afford

to laugh at it. Party System, War Office, Company Promoting are all subjects of excellent jokes. Gilbert even dared to laugh at the frugality of the Victorian drawing-room. At the drawing-room held by his king, certain judicious innovations are made. "The cup of tea and the plate of mixed biscuits were a cheap, effective inspiration."

The production of *Utopia Limited* was the most elaborate ever attempted at the Savoy, the scene of the throne-room in the second act being particularly gorgeous. During the rehearsals Sullivan appears to have been terrified at the proposed expenses, and Gilbert wrote to him on August 30, 1893 :

DEAR S.,—

I quite agree with you that it is desirable that the enormous estimated expense of production should be curtailed if this can be done without cramping the piece. I confess I should be sorry to lose the gentlemen-at-arms, who always stand two at the entrance and two at the exit of the Presence Chamber, and I am afraid that without them the ladies will have the appearance of loafing on to the stage without any "circumstance." Besides, you must remember that these four people must be dressed somehow. They can't go naked (unless you insist on it), and if they are put into good uniforms they will cost at least fifty pounds apiece. . . .

I am as much for retrenchment as you are. The only question is, where can it be best effected and with least injury to the piece? I agree with you that the ladies' bouquets and diamonds might well be curtailed. The merest paste mixed with glass emeralds and rubies will do for the jewellery.

Very truly yours,  
W. S. GILBERT

The trouble in *Utopia* begins when the king orders "that the Utopian language shall be abolished from his court, and that all communications shall henceforward be made in the English tongue." An English governess is appointed for his daughters. An English soldier explains our military traditions :

"When Britain sounds the trump of war,  
(And Europe trembles)  
The army of that conqueror  
In serried ranks assembles ;

'Tis then this warrior's eyes and sabre gleam  
 For our protection—  
 He represents a military scheme  
 In all its proud perfection."

There is an English lawyer M.P. and an English Lord Chamberlain :

"What these may be, Utopians all,  
 Perhaps you'll hardly guess—  
 They're types of England's physical  
 And moral cleanliness.  
 This is a Lord High Chamberlain,  
 Of purity the gauge—  
 He'll cleanse our Court from moral stain  
 And purify our Stage!"

And an English company promoter :

"A Company Promoter this, with special education  
 Which teaches what Contango means and also Backwardation.  
 To speculators he supplies a grand financial leaven,  
 Time was when *two* were company—but now it must be seven."

And finally, the very English Captain Sir Edward Corcoran, R.N., borrowed from *H.M.S. Pinafore* :

"I'm Captain Corcoran, K.C.B.,  
 I'll teach you how we rule the sea,  
 And terrify the simple Gaul,  
 And how the Saxon and the Celt  
 Their Europe-shaking blows have dealt  
 With Maxim gun and Nordenfolt  
 (Or will, when the occasion calls).  
 If sailor-like you'd play your cards,  
 Unbend your sails and lower your yards,  
 Unstep your masts—you'll never want 'em more—  
 Though we're no longer hearts of oak,  
 Yet we can steer and we can stoke,  
 And thanks to coal, and thanks to coke,  
 We never run a ship ashore!"

The Cabinet sitting in a row like Christie minstrels is a most admirable joke. For us, the most genuine Gilbert in *Utopia Limited* is the chorus :

"Eagle high in cloudland soaring—  
 Sparrow twittering on a reed—  
 Tiger in the jungle roaring—  
 Frightened fawn in grassy mead—  
 Let the eagle, not the sparrow,  
 Be the object of your arrow—  
 Fix the tiger with your eye—  
 Pass the fawn in pity by.  
 Glory then will crown the day—  
 Glory, glory, anyway!"

*Utopia Limited* ran at the Savoy for 245 performances, and finished on June 9, 1894. On March 7, 1896, Mr. D'Oyly Carte produced *The Grand Duke*, the last Gilbert and Sullivan opera, and also the least successful of the series. The following is the cast:

RUDOLPH (Grand Duke of Pfenig Halbpfenig)	<i>Mr. Walter Passmore</i>
ERNEST DUMMKOPF (a Theatrical Manager)	<i>Mr. C. Kenningham</i>
LUDWIG (his leading Comedian) . . . . .	<i>Mr. Ruiland Barrington</i>
DR. TANNHAUSER (a Notary) . . . . .	<i>Mr. Scott Russell</i>
THE PRINCE OF MONTE CARLO . . . . .	<i>Mr. Scott Fische</i>
VISCOUNT MENTONE . . . . .	<i>Mr. Carlton</i>
BEN HASHBAZ (a Costumier) . . . . .	<i>Mr. Workman</i>
HERALD . . . . .	<i>Mr. Jones Hewson</i>
THE PRINCESS OF MONTE CARLO (betrothed to Rudolph) . . . . .	<i>Miss Emmie Owen</i>
THE BARONESS VON KRAKENFELDT (betrothed to Rudolph) . . . . .	<i>Miss Rosina Brandram</i>
JULIA JELICOE (an English Comedienne) .	<i>Mdme. Ilka von Palmay</i>
LISA (a Soubrette) . . . . .	<i>Miss Florence Perry</i>
OLGA . . . . .	<i>Miss Mildred Baker</i>
GRETCHEN . . . . .	<i>Miss Ruth Vincent</i>
BERTHA . . . . .	<i>Miss Jessie Rose</i>
ELSA . . . . .	<i>Miss Ethel Wilson</i>
MARTHA . . . . .	<i>Miss Beatrice Perry</i>

It would be idle to pretend that there is much of the genius of Gilbert in the libretto of *The Grand Duke*, though the plot has topsy-turvy humour and some of the verses are characteristic in their ingenuity—for example, the song sung by the Grand Duke:



"A pattern to professors of monarchical autonomy,  
 I don't indulge in levity or compromising *bonhomie*,  
 But dignified formality, consistent with economy,  
 Above all other virtues I particularly prize.  
 I never join in merriment—I don't see joke or jape any—  
 I never tolerate familiarity in shape any—  
 This, joined with an extravagant respect for tuppence ha'penny,  
 A keynote to my character sufficiently supplies."

On November 7, 1900, *Patience* was revived with immense success at the Savoy. At the fall of the curtain only Gilbert and D'Oyly Carte went on the stage to take "the call." Sir Arthur Sullivan was very ill, and on November 22 he died. Ten days before his death, Gilbert wrote to him from Grim's Dyke:

MY DEAR SULLIVAN,—

I would gladly come up to town and see you before I go, but unfortunately in my present enfeebled condition a carriage journey to London involves my lying down a couple of hours before I am fit for anything, besides stopping all night in town. The railway journey is still more fatiguing. I have lost sixty pounds in weight, and my arms and legs are of the consistency of cotton-wool. I sincerely hope to find you all right again on my return, and the new opera running merrily.

Yours very truly,  
 W. S. GILBERT

And he adds as a postscript, referring to the revival of *Patience*:  
 "The old opera woke up splendidly."

With the death of Sullivan, the most famous, the most interesting, the most successful collaboration in the whole history of the theatre came to an end.

*H.M.S. Pinafore* was produced in America soon after its London production, and was received with what a writer in *Scribner's Magazine* calls "an enthusiasm bordering upon insanity." So great, indeed, was the American success that in 1879 Gilbert and Sullivan themselves went to America with D'Oyly Carte and Alfred Cellier, the musical conductor, to produce *The Pirates of Penzance*, which was first played at the Fifth Avenue Theatre, New York, on December 31, 1879, three months before its production in London. One



Dear Anderson.

This is the ex-considered Prince, Monte Carlo.  
 Very fair Ramblers wig, I think, to contrast with  
 Barrington's black Louis XIV wig. This part defines  
 the character."

Very truly  
 G. Gilbert

The Prince's dress should be of excellent quality - very gay & ornate.  
 The Princess should wear a dress of the same period (or nearly) but so made  
 as to allow of her dancing a wild jig. - No trinity, I think.

GILBERT'S ORIGINAL DESIGN FOR THE PRINCE OF MONTE CARLO'S  
 DRESS FOR "THE GRAND DUKE"



evening during his stay in New York, Gilbert met the chief of the city's police, who told him that New York possessed the most efficient police force in the world. In order to make conversation, Gilbert remarked that he supposed that, if that was so, burglaries were quite unknown. The police chief was most offended. "Sir," he said, "I would have you to know that there are more burglaries in New York than in any other city on earth."

The success of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas has been greater in the United States even than it has been in Great Britain. At one time forty different companies were playing the operas simultaneously. In a small book published in Boston shortly after the death of Gilbert, Mr. Isaac Goldberg says :

"He found the stage a prey to the coarsest, least refined form of burlesque ; he left it an endowment of the richest wit and humour for this genre known in any country."

Mr. Goldberg adds :

"There is in these literary, artistic libretti that symmetry, counterpoise, and harmony of parts without which a work stands little chance of being remembered. . . . There is no figure of the past or present to whom Gilbert can be likened."

There is a curious and interesting anticipation of the perfection of the Gilbert and Sullivan collaboration in an imaginary conversation by Hoffmann, which he calls "The Poet and the Composer." In this conversation the musician confesses that he needs "the fire of inspiration in the libretto." And the poet replies that to write a libretto is "the most difficult and thankless task in the world," because "when fine verse is written it is often mangled by wrong syllabic division to fit the music." It is argued that "for music to be at its best it must be allied to real poetry." In a sense, the poet is himself a musician, even though he is entirely without technical musical knowledge, and there is a close alliance between poet and musician, because "the secret of word and tone harmony is one and the same."

"Music alone is at home in pure phantasy," writes Hoffmann, and this would seem to suggest the explanation of the inspiration that Sullivan received from Gilbert's fantastic plots. Opéra bouffe can be made of "everyday folk in everyday clothes," and yet "it should have all the fine shades of romantic opera." The methods of Gilbert and Sullivan are anticipated in the dictum: "The librettist must, like the designer, draw the whole picture with clear, decisive, accurate strokes. Then comes the music to fill in the details." The librettist draws the outline, the composer fills it in. Hoffmann insists that humorous music should have its delicate intricacies and should be raised to the same artistic level as other music, and he quotes Mozart's "*Così fan tutte!*" as an example of humorous music of the highest order.

Gilbert and Sullivan are, certainly, the only librettist and composer who have succeeded in putting the Hoffmann ideal into practice.

That Gilbert owed anything to Hoffmann is an impossibility, for two reasons. He never knew a word of German, and none of the translations of "Poet and Composer" by Major Ewing and others appeared in French or English until the chief Savoy operas were household words.

Gilbert would have had good grounds for his dislike of German had he read either of the three versions of *The Mikado* published in that language in America and Germany. Bad, worse, worst, sums them up almost without comment. Instances of bad taste are ubiquitous—the immortal "Little List" is made a mere vehicle for the cheap, vulgar suggestive references, abhorrent to Gilbert, to mothers-in-law and peccant wives. The melody, the grace, the thistledown airiness vanish, the "perverse fairy" flies from such heavy handling. A single brief quotation from "The Three Little Maids" is more than enough:

"Drei aus dem Pensionat sind wir,  
Ganze ohne Argwohn stehn wir hier,

Denn unser Herz hüpf't vor Plaisir—  
Drei aus dem Pensionat ! ”

“Drei kleine Mädchen, süsse, gute,  
Aus einen Damen-Institute,  
Glücklich entwischt sind wir der Rutte—  
Drei aus dem Pensionat ! ”

“Tit-willow” translated suffices to shatter the preposterous delusion of the “eighties,” that German lent its gutturals to music better than English.

“Auf der Weide am fluss  
Sass ein Bachstelchen klein ! ”

This chapter on the work of Gilbert in collaboration with Sullivan may fitly be brought to an end with a reproduction of an amusing W. S. Gilbert examination paper published in the *Westminster Gazette* twelve years ago.

The questions refer only to the *Bab Ballads* and to the thirteen Savoy operas produced in collaboration with Sir Arthur Sullivan.

(1) Write a brief essay on Gilbert's use of “chops” or “mutton-chops,” with references to at least two operas and three *Bab Ballads*.

(2) Draw up a table to show when Frederic was born. Do you consider that Gilbert forgot that 1900 would not be a leap-year ? And if so, why do you think so ?

(3) Collect anecdotes from the *Bab Ballads* about colonial bishops, and quote from an opera a description of their diocesan atmosphere.

(4) Which chorus had at least one grandparent living ? On the authority of what statement ?

(5) Quote from two operas two references to oil at different temperatures, and two stage-directions for the display of indifference.

(6) Who was rather dressy for her age, and what was her age ?

(7) Describe in Gilbert's words two A's, three B's, two C's, D's, E's, and F's, and one G. How does the last of these differ from someone in another opera, who was said to have been seen doing what with whom on the what of the what ?

(8) Identify (a) a man all poesy and buzzem ; (b) a quiet venerable duck ; (c) Popsy ; (d) the man who had the run of the royal rum ; (e) the man who drove a Putney bus. (Give full name and creed in the last case.)

(9) Who, and in which opera, married his nurse ? What was his Christian name, and how do you know it ?

(10) The following phrases occur each in two different operas. Give references or quote context to identify them :—(a) Matrimonified ; (b) Monday Pops ; (c) shrivel into raisins ; (d) despite his best endeavour ; (e) each a little bit afraid is ; (f) miminy-piminy ; (g) ladies' seminary. (In the last instance give all words rhyming to " seminary " in both cases.)

(11) Explain, with reference :—(a) Basingstoke ; (b) Burglaree ; (c) a descendant by purchase ; (d) that's so like a band ; (e) Mr. Wilkinson ; (f) Warren ; (g) Stephen Trusty ; (h) Gideon Crawle ; (i) the dancing catalogue of crime.

(12) Give eight pairs of forced rhymes for one opera. Where is the only metrical error in any opera ? Quote the two best examples from the whole works of common phrase introduced rhythmically.

Gilbert was warmly appreciative of the part played in the Savoy partnership by Mr. and Mrs. D'Oyly Carte, and even after the disagreement his letters were cordial. In the early days of the enterprise, Mrs. Carte, who maiden name was Lenoir, was D'Oyly Carte's secretary, a lady of unusual capacity, which Gilbert certainly did not fail to recognize. He wrote to her in 1883 :

19, HARRINGTON GARDENS,  
SOUTH KENSINGTON,  
Nov. 25, 1883.

DEAR MISS LENOIR,—

I am really quite distressed that I should have referred so lightly to the remarkable letter I received from you yesterday. I thought it would turn out to be a mere statement of account, or something equally unnecessary as between us.

I don't believe there is another woman alive who could have stated so complicated a case in such a masterly manner. Of the hearty zeal and goodwill embodied in your letter, and evinced in the tremendous efforts you have made on our behalf, I can hardly trust myself to write lest I should seem to be using extravagant terms. Let me prove how implicitly I believe in your brain-faculty and acute judgment by saying that, whatever your scheme may be, I will adopt it if you recommend it.

Thanking you very heartily,

I am, always truly yours,

W. S. GILBERT

MISS LENOIR.

Three months afterwards he accents this implicit confidence :

19, HARRINGTON GARDENS,  
SOUTH KENSINGTON,

Feb. 4, '84.

MY DEAR MISS LENOIR,—

I have the honour to be,

Madam,

Your very obliged and  
truly humble servant,

W. S. GILBERT,

and will therefore sign any blessed thing you tell me to.

Gilbert had a quaint affection for codes, and in the heyday of the Savoy triumphs he arranged a code for communications between the theatre and himself.

24, THE BOLTONS,  
SOUTH KENSINGTON,

Dec. 21.

DEAR CARTE,—

As anything we say at night by telephone is liable to be heard by the Court Theatre people—and as it is undesirable that they should know the character of the business we are doing, I think it would be well if, in giving me the nightly returns by telephone, a simple cypher be employed. Take the word "Favourites," this consists of 10 letters, none of which are repeated. Then F will stand for 1, A for 2, V for 3, and so on.

F A V O U R I T E S

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

In telephoning (say) £265, the clerk will say A R U pounds; so £128 would be F A T (but not very fat), and so on.

Don't you think so?

Yours very truly,

W. S. GILBERT

He had prophesied failure for a Sullivan grand opera, and for the Palace Theatre, which D'Oyly Carte built for its production. But after seeing *Ivanhoe*, he wrote a cordial appreciation. This letter has an additional interest in its evidence of Gilbert's meticulous care for the details of stage-management.



GRIM'S DYKE,  
HARROW WEALD,  
Feb. 12, '91.

DEAR MRS. CARTE,—

I was much pleased with Miss Macintyre and Mr. Oudin last night—though Miss M. should show a little more emotion at the stake. The theatre is most convenient and admirable for sound. The opera was more tuneful than I was led to expect. I am, as you know, quite unable to appreciate high-class music, and I expected to be bored—and I was not. This is the highest compliment I ever paid a grand opera. Friar Tuck's part seemed (to me) excellent both in dialogue and music—it is a pity the part could not have been played by a fat man. Its present representative over-acts—he will *not* be quiet. Don't you think you want another dozen people on the left of the stage (up stage) during the last scene, to balance the templars? From the left of the house I should fancy most of the chorus would be invisible. And I think—indeed, I am sure—I should abolish the small tables in Act I, between the high table and the footlights. Poor Ivanhoe ought not to have to sing his opening recitative at the side and from behind a lot of people.

Yours very truly,  
W. S. GILBERT

P.S.—Could not the high table be placed further up the stage? And Rebecca should mount on the *top* of the battlement in her scene with the crusader. As it is, she doesn't look as if she meant throwing herself off.

In his own operas, no item was too small for him to give if personal attention, and, as the following letters prove, he was as careful with the revivals as with the original productions.

GRIM'S DYKE,  
HARROW WEALD.  
Ap. 15, '97.

DEAR MRS. CARTE,—

I met Craven at the Tower this morning and selected a capital and most effective scene. He is to have the model ready by Monday, and I am to meet him at the Savoy Theatre on Monday at 11.30 to approve it. Perhaps you would like to be present.

Yours very truly,  
W. S. GILBERT.

The scene was, of course, for *The Yeomen of the Guard*. In the next letters he refers to a revival of *Iolanthe*.



Dear Andrew.

This is my idea of the six nobles. If course you will greatly improve upon these crude suggestions.

Very truly  
yours  
W. G. Wells

ANOTHER OF THE DRAMATIST'S COSTUME DRAWINGS FOR  
"THE GRAND DUKE"



GRIM'S DYKE,  
HARROW WEALD,  
Nov. 24, 1901.

DEAR MRS. CARTE,—

An important idea has occurred to me. We were *quite wrong* in putting the two earls in Act 2 into plain court dress. That is the dress of men who have no rank above baronets—or, at all events, who are not peers and knights of orders. A G.C.B. or a K.G. would *never* appear in velvet court dress—he would be certain to hold some appointment that would give him the right to wear a uniform. I should say that it would be best to put them into *Lords Lieutenants' dress* (red coats, silver striped trousers, general's gold belt and cocked hat). These are posts that are (with one or two exceptions) held by peers of considerable landed property, and would be perfectly suitable to these two earls—who ought also to wear the *star* of the order of knighthood assigned to them in Act I. Plain court dress would be impossible for such howling swells. Also, the peers ought to have calico or brown holland makeshift robes to rehearse in—as they did when the piece was produced—otherwise they will get into great trouble with their trains, etc. So long as they are of the right length, the detail of the robes is of no importance in the calico form.

Yours very truly,  
W. S. GILBERT

GRIM'S DYKE,  
HARROW WEALD,  
Dec. 8, 1901.

DEAR MRS. CARTE,—

It has occurred to me that it would be good to have *practicable* hands to the clock in Act 2, with *real* clockwork—(to be wound up every night before the act opens) and set to the actual hour of the night—say five minutes past ten (or whatever the hour may be), and let it move on through the act to ten minutes past 11—or whatever the hour of finishing may be—showing always throughout the act the actual current hour.

The clockwork wouldn't cost above £1, and could be wound up when the scene is lowered.

I think people would talk about it, and it would become a good advt.

Of course, the clockwork should be *quite compact* and occupy as small a space as possible in the middle of the clock, so as not to obscure the transparency too much.

Yours very truly,  
W. S. GILBERT

In the years when another librettist was working with Sullivan at the Savoy, he wrote to Mrs. Carte: "I hope your

rehearsals are going on satisfactorily and that the prospects for the new piece are bright." And to show the continuance of his appreciation, he wrote after a 1900 revival: "I am very much obliged to you for your great kindness on my behalf."

## CHAPTER VI

### LATER PLAYS

ON January 4, 1892, in what may be called the Sullivan interregnum, Gilbert's *The Mountebanks*, with music by Alfred Cellier, was produced by Horace Sedger at the Lyric Theatre. The following was the cast :

ARROSTINO ANNEGATO (Captain of the Tamorras, a Secret Society) . . . . .	<i>Mr. Frank Wyatt</i>
GIORGIO RAVIOLI } Members of his Band . . . . .	<i>Mr. Arthur Playfair</i>
LUIGI SPAGHETTI } . . . . .	<i>Mr. Charles Gilbert</i>
ALFREDO (a Young Peasant, loved by Ultrice, but in love with Teresa) . . . . .	<i>Mr. J. Robertson</i>
PIETRO (Proprietor of a Troupe of Mountebanks) . . . . .	<i>Mr. Lionel Brough</i>
BARTOLO (his Clown) . . . . .	<i>Mr. Harry Monkhouse</i>
ELVINO DI PASTA (an Innkeeper) . . . . .	<i>Mr. Furneaux Cook</i>
RISOTTO (one of the Tamorras—just married to Minestra) . . . . .	<i>Mr. Cecil Burt</i>
BEPPLO . . . . .	<i>Mr. Gilbert Porteous</i>
TERESA (a Village Beauty, loved by Alfredo, and in love with herself) . . . . .	<i>Miss Geraldine Ulmar</i>
ULTRICE (in love with and detested by Alfredo) . . . . .	<i>Miss Lucille Saunders</i>
NITA (a Dancing Girl) . . . . .	<i>Miss Aida Jenoure</i>
MINESTRA (Risotto's Bride) . . . . .	<i>Miss Eva Moore</i>

The scene of *The Mountebanks* is Sicily, and among the names that Gilbert gives his characters are Ravioli, Spaghetti, Elvino, Risotto. Gilbert was always anxious to find picturesque settings for his operas, and at one time he thought of using Burma as a scene. Perhaps the best songs in the opera are the jokes about Hamlet, which Gilbert had already burlesqued in his *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern*. The showman,

Pietro, has two waxwork figures of Hamlet and Ophelia, and in inviting the villagers to watch their antics, he sings :

" Now all you pretty villagers who haven't paid, stand *you* aside,  
And listen to a tragic tale of love, despair, and suicide.  
The gentleman's a noble prince—a marvel of ventriloquy—  
Unhappily afflicted with a mania for soliloquy.  
The lady is the victim of the God of Love tyrannical—  
You see it in her gestures, which are morbidly mechanical ;  
He's backed himself at heavy odds, in proof of his ability  
That he'll soliloquize her into utter imbecility.  
She wildly begs him to desist—appeals to his humanity,  
But all in vain—observe her eyes a-goggling with insanity.  
He perseveres, improving the occasion opportunatic—  
She sticks straws in her hair—he's won his wager—she's a lunatic ! "

Later in the play he returns to the same theme :

" Ophelia was a dainty little maid,  
Who loved a very melancholy Dane ;  
Whose affection of the heart, so it is said,  
Preceded his affection of the brain.  
Heir-apparent to the Crown,  
He thought lightly of her passion.  
Having wandered up and down,  
In an incoherent fashion,  
When she found he wouldn't wed her,  
In a river, in a meadder,  
Took a header, and a deader  
Was Ophelia ! "

*The Mountebanks* was a considerable success, and that fact dispels the illusion that Gilbert could not succeed without Sullivan.

During the run of *The Mountebanks*, Gilbert wrote the following letter to Mr. D'Oyly Carte :

36, PRINCES GARDENS, S.W.,  
Jan. 28, '94.

DEAR CARTE,—

As I told you some time since, Sedger suddenly dismissed a number of his chorus (I think 18), although they were engaged for the run of the piece. They expostulated and eventually commenced actions, and, on finding them to be in earnest, Sedger changed his ground and

wrote to each telling them that they were not dismissed, but simply given two months' vacation—which, by agreement, he had the power to do. The solicitor for the choristers is anxious to prove that it is not the custom to use a clause of the kind in order to get rid of individuals—which he has confessed to be his object. They want you and me to give evidence to this effect, but as I have no practical knowledge of the matter (although I know the *theory* perfectly well), I am afraid my evidence would not be very valuable. You have always shown so much consideration and sympathy for choristers—and the Savoy is always quoted by them as the only theatre in London in which they are fairly treated—so they hope you won't mind going into the box to say that the usual vacation clause is not customarily used in order to get rid of artists, but simply and bona fide for the purpose of giving them a rest at the dull season of the year. You see in this case Sedger actually *dismissed* them, and then, *finding that they denied his power to do this* and declined to accept the dismissal, he told them that he would give them two months' vacation instead—clearly showing that he had in his mind a desire to get rid of them, in spite of the fact that their engagements were for the "run."

The case will be heard at the Westminster County Court on Feb. 28. Of course, they will wire to you when they want you.

Yours very truly,

W. S. GILBERT

This letter is characteristic of Gilbert's care for the lesser artists of his companies. In 1898 he wrote with a similar thought to Mrs. Carte:

"There seems to be some misunderstanding about the understudy of Casilda. I proposed Miss Gerrard to Cellier, who said she had a very pretty voice and could sing the music excellently. So I asked her to study the part—which she did—and I rehearsed her twice in it and found her quite competent, and, as I understood, the matter was settled. She now writes to tell me that the part has been given to someone else. This is surely unfair to her. Perhaps you will kindly look into the matter, as I know how just you are and how unwilling you would be to disappoint a young lady who had been given reason to suppose that she was cast for the part."

On October 27, 1894, between the Savoy productions of *Utopia Limited* and *The Grand Duke, His Excellency* was produced at the Lyric. The libretto was set to music by Dr. Osmond Carr, and the cast was as follows:



THE PRINCE REGENT . . . . .	<i>Mr. Rutland Barrington</i>
GEORGE GRIFFENFELD . . . . .	<i>Mr. George Grossmith</i>
ERLING SYKKE . . . . .	<i>Mr. Charles Kenningham</i>
DR. TORTENSSEN . . . . .	<i>Mr. Augustus Cramer</i>
MATS MUNCK . . . . .	<i>Mr. John le Haye</i>
CORPORAL HAROLD . . . . .	<i>Mr. Arthur Playfair</i>
A SENTRY . . . . .	<i>Mr. George Temple</i>
FIRST OFFICER . . . . .	<i>Mr. Ernest Snow</i>
SECOND OFFICER . . . . .	<i>Mr. Frank Morton</i>
CHRISTINA . . . . .	<i>Miss Nancy McIntosh</i>
NANNA . . . . .	<i>Miss Jessie Bond</i>
THORA . . . . .	<i>Miss Ellaline Terriss</i>
DAME HECLA CORTLANDT . . . . .	<i>Miss Alice Barnett</i>
BLANCA . . . . .	<i>Miss Gertrude Aylward</i>
ELSA . . . . .	<i>Miss May Cross</i>

*His Excellency* unquestionably contains the best verse that Gilbert wrote in his later years. The lyrics are far less familiar than those of the Savoy operas, and for this reason the Played-out Humorist may be worth quoting in full :

" Quixotic is his enterprise, and hopeless his adventure is,  
Who seeks for jocularities that haven't yet been said.  
The world has joked incessantly for over fifty centuries,  
And every joke that's possible has long ago been made.  
I started as a humorist with lots of mental fizziness,  
But humour is a drug which it's the fashion to abuse ;  
For my stock-in-trade, my fixtures, and the goodwill of the business  
No reasonable offer I am likely to refuse.  
And if anybody choose,  
He may circulate the news  
That no reasonable offer I am likely to refuse.

" Oh happy was that humorist—the first that made a pun at all—  
Who when a joke occurred to him, however poor and mean,  
Was absolutely certain that it never had been done at all—  
How popular at dinners must that humorist have been !  
On the days when some stepfather for the query held a handle out,  
The door-mat from the scraper, is it distant very far ?  
And when no one knew where Moses was when Aaron put the candle  
out,  
And no one had discovered that a door could be a-jar !  
But your modern hearers are  
In their tastes particular,  
And they sneer if you inform them that a door can be a-jar !

" In search of quip and quiddity I've sat all day, alone, apart,  
 And all that I could hit on as a problem was—to find  
 Analogy between a scrag of mutton and a Bony-part,  
 Which offers slight employment to the speculative mind :  
 For you cannot call it very good, however great your charity—  
 It's not the sort of humour that is greeted with a shout—  
 And I've come to the conclusion that the mine of jocularity,  
 In present Anno Domini, is worked completely out !  
 Though the notion you may scout,  
 I can prove beyond a doubt  
 That the mine of jocularity is utterly worked out ! "

It is not perhaps without something of a pathetic suggestion that Gilbert printed these verses at the end of the collected *Bab Ballads* which he published in 1897. Excellently humorous is the duet between the Governor and Dame Cortlandt, and one feels there is more than a little truth in the Regent's song, in which he recounts the horror of constantly listening to the National Anthem :

" A King, though he's pestered with cares,  
 Though, no doubt, he can often trepan them ;  
 But one comes in a shape he can never escape—  
 The implacable National Anthem !  
 Though for quiet and rest he may yearn,  
 It pursues him at every turn—  
 No chance of forsaking  
 Its rococo numbers ;  
 They haunt him when waking—  
 They poison his slumbers !  
 Like the Banbury lady, whom every one knows,  
 He's cursed with its music wherever he goes !  
 Though its words but imperfectly rhyme  
 And the devil himself couldn't scan them,  
 With composure polite he endures day and night  
 That illiterate National Anthem !

" It serves a good purpose I own :  
 Its strains are devout and impressive—  
 Its heart-stirring notes raise a lump in our throats  
 As we burn with devotion excessive :  
 But the King, who's been bored by that song  
 From his cradle—each day—all day long—

Who's heard it loud-shouted  
 By throats operatic,  
 And loyally spouted  
 By courtiers emphatic—  
 By soldier—by sailor—by drum and by fife—  
 Small blame if he thinks it the plague of his life!  
 While his subjects sing loudly and long,  
 Their King—who would willingly ban them—  
 Sits, worry disguising, anathematizing  
 That Bogie, the National Anthem!"

On May 3, 1904, Mr. Arthur Bouchier produced Gilbert's fantastic drama, *The Fairy's Dilemma*, at the Garrick Theatre. The cast was as follows:

#### SUPERNATURALS

THE DEMON ALCOHOL . . . . . *Mr. Gerald Robertshaw*  
 THE FAIRY ROSEBUD . . . . . *Miss Jessie Bateman*

#### UNNATURALS

COL. SIR TREVOR MAULEVERER, BART., of the  
 Household Cavalry (afterwards Clown) . . . *Mr. Arthur Bouchier*  
 THE REV. ALOYSIUS PARFITT, M.A., of S.  
 Parabola's (afterwards Harlequin) . . . *Mr. O. B. Clarence*  
 MR. JUSTICE WHORTLE, of the High Court of  
 Judicature (afterwards Pantaloon) . . . *Mr. Sydney Valentine*  
 THE LADY ANGELA WEALDSTONE, Daughter  
 of the Marquis of Harrow (afterwards  
 Columbine) . . . . . *Miss Violet Vanbrugh*  
 CLARISSA (Daughter of Mr. Justice Whortle) . . *Miss Dorothy Grimstone*  
 MRS. CRUMBLE (Housekeeper to Mr. Parfitt) . . *Miss Ewell*

At the end of 1903, Gilbert wrote:

"Shall I tell you a great secret? I'm writing a play that will be produced at the Garrick. . . . It seems quite odd after so many years' idleness. But I must make an effort to keep the little home together. When you see the piece, I think you'll call it rather 'young' for a wretched old josser in his sixty-eighth year."

In 1904 he continues:

"Now I've got to go to the Garrick Theatre for rehearsal. They are all very civil and kind, but it is different from the Savoy, where everything went by clockwork. There's a sad want of method at the Garrick, and I've had to put my foot down!"

On May 6, he added :

" I have every reason to be satisfied with the reception of the child of my own old age. I *was* there, but I wouldn't 'bow on.' The better class of dramatic authors have agreed not to do so, as there is invariably a body of roughs in the gallery who encourage an author to appear in order that they may insult him when he complies with their request. These butchers and bakers and candlestick-makers are the curse of the theatre. Utterly ignorant brutes, they take upon themselves to decide what is to be received and what is to be rejected, and consequently many authors only consider them in writing plays. This accounts for much of the bad work put before the public. If I were a manager, I would close the gallery on first nights."

Five years later, Gilbert's last opera, *Fallen Fairies*, with music by Edward German, was produced at the Savoy, with Miss Nancy McIntosh as the Fairy Queen :

## FAIRIES

THE FAIRY ETHAIS . . . . .	Mr. Claude Flemming
THE FAIRY PHYLLON. . . . .	Mr. Leo Sheffield
SELENE (the Fairy Queen) . . . . .	Miss Nancy McIntosh
DARINE	Miss Maidie Hope.
ZAYDA	Miss Jessie Rose
LOCRINE	Miss Ethel Morrison
ZARA	Miss Mabel Burnege
CORA	Miss Rita Otway
LILA	Miss Ruby Grey
NEODIE	Miss Alice Cox
FLETA	Miss Marjorie Dawes
CHLORIS	Miss Gladys Lancaster
MAIA	Miss Miriam Lycett
CLYTIE	Miss Isabel Agnew
and	
LUTIN ( a Serving Fairy) . . . . .	Mr. C. Herbert Workman

## MORTALS

SIR ETHAIS	} Two Hunnish Knights	Mr. Claude Flemming
SIR PHYLLON		Mr. Leo Sheffield
LUTIN (Sir Ethais's Henchman) . . . . .		Mr. C. Herbert Workman

The dialogue is written in blank verse. Gilbert himself had doubts about the opera's success, but its comparative failure was none the less a considerable disappointment to him. The opera suffered extremely from the lack of a male chorus.

An opera based on *The Wicked World*, the origin of *Fallen Fairies*, had been in Gilbert's mind for years. He wrote to Mrs. Carte in 1897:

GRIM'S DYKE,  
HARROW WEALD,  
Ap. 11, '97.

DEAR MRS. CARTE,—

I merely suggested *The Wicked World* as the basis of a piece—I don't at all *press* it. Carte's objection to the chorus being composed entirely of ladies may be a perfectly valid one. I am no musician and cannot express a useful opinion on such a point, but I should suggest that when the composer is decided upon, *he* should be consulted upon the point and his opinion might be taken as final. It is quite possible that he might be fascinated by the novelty of the idea—it is often useful to shake off conventionalities.

It has occurred to me that the difficulty might be met by making the fairies *syrens* on a rock in the Mediterranean. They discourse of the evils that come from love, and consider that much good might be done if a shipful of mortals are lured to their island in order that they may be indoctrinated with the new theory. A shipful of classical warriors—Ulysses and his companions, say—are lured to their island by their songs, and as a consequence, the syrens, while preaching the horrors of love, fall hopelessly in love with the new-comers. Then all sorts of catastrophes result, the piece ending as *The Wicked World* ends, with the departure of the disgusted visitors in their ship and the restoration of peace and happiness to the syrens. This would provide a male chorus if this element is held to be indispensable.

Do I gather from your letter that you are prepared to commission me to write an opera libretto on the terms arranged for *The Grand Duke*—subject, of course, to Carte's approval of the scenario? If so, I will set to work at once to find a plot—if Carte doesn't think the groundwork I have suggested will do.

Very truly yours,  
W. S. GILBERT

GRIM'S DYKE,  
HARROW WEALD,  
Ap. 13, '97.

DEAR MRS. CARTE,—

It has occurred to me that the fact that classical dresses were used in Act 2 of *The Grand Duke* is a reason why the male characters in the projected piece should *not* be Ulysses and his companions. There is no reason why they should not be mediævals, or even people of to-day, though, personally, I should prefer mediævals. I should make the piece much more broadly humorous than *The Wicked*

*World*, keeping the principal lady to whatever there is of dramatic and sentimental and surrounding her with people whose parts should be written in a humorous key.

Yours fhly,

W. S. GILBERT

Much of the writing of *Fallen Fairies* is ingenious, some of it has genuine beauty. The fairy duet in the first act is characteristic :

“ Man is a brute, oppressed by strange  
Unintellectuality :  
Enlighten him, and you will change  
His normal immorality.  
If we exhibited to some  
Our course of life delectable,  
They might in course of time become  
Comparatively respectable !  
Oh, picture then  
Our joy sublime,  
If mortal men  
Became in time—  
Suppose we say,  
In guarded way,  
Comparatively respectable ! ”

After *Fallen Fairies* Gilbert decided to write no more libretti. He said in a letter to Mrs. Carte :

“ I certainly do not intend to write any more libretti. The difference between working for the Savoy, where I had a free hand, and working under a manager of any other theatre, would (apart from other considerations) place my doing so out of the question.”

The Savoy Theatre was sold by Mrs. Carte after her husband's death, and this final end of a great enterprise caused Gilbert genuine pain. “ It's sad to think of the old show being handed over to the Philistines,” he wrote to Mrs. Carte. “ I'm sure that you and I could have worked the theatre together to the advantage of both. But it's too late now ! ”

Five years later he returned to the same subject :

52, PONT STREET, S.W.,

Mar. 12, 1909.

DEAR MRS. CARTE,—

I am deeply sorry for the fate that has overtaken the Savoy. I hear on all sides that *The Love Birds* is an insult to one's understanding.

I couldn't stand Walkley's statement in *The Times* that musical comedy had snuffed out Savoy opera, so I had to write and contradict it.

Very truly yours,

W. S. GILBERT

Gilbert's last work was *The Hooligan*, a grim little sketch of the last moments of a convicted murderer, played by Mr. James Welch, and produced at the Coliseum in 1911, shortly before the dramatist's death. In this last play Gilbert was supremely successful. Indeed, it may, we think, be reckoned the greatest serious achievement of his career. The plot, a decadent wastrel waiting in the condemned cell for the hour of execution, is a throw-back to the Dickens of *Oliver Twist*, and the cockney dialect is more Victorian than Georgian. But the little play has real dramatic grip, and the convict's dream is a finely conceived serious version of the famous "Nightmare" song:

SOLLY. Bad night's rest! I ain't 'ad no night's rest. Just a bleeding nightmare, I've 'ad. Oh, them nights! The day's bad enough for a pore bloke wot can't read, and nuffin to do but to count the flies on the wall and wonder wot it's goin' to be like when it comes—only broke up by a hour's trudge outside and a cigarette by the Governor's permission. Ah, the days is bad enough, but the nights! O Gawd, the nights! The lyin' awake for hours—with a sick feelin' at your 'art—and when you drops off, comes dreams that makes you blarst the sleep that brings 'em!

MATHERS. Dreams about the poor girl?

SOLLY. Aباht 'er? No fear. It's one dream that comes every bloomin' night, and sometimes twicest a night and more! There's the court—not a reg'lar proper court as one's seen eversomany times, but a court half a mile acrost an' a quarter of a mile deep, wiv a red judge eversofar off in the middle; five 'undred jurymen on one side, a couple of 'undred lawyers in the middle, an' a thousand public coves on the other—the jury noddin' their 'eds all the time, and the lawyers noddin' their 'eds, an' the public noddin' theirs—all a-noddin' 'cept the old judge. An' 'e ses, ses he, "Prisoner at the bar," ses he, "them

jurymen has found you guilty, and blow me if I ain't o' their way of thinkin'," ses 'e. "And this 'ere's the sentence," ses 'e, and 'e claps a black cap on 'is napper an' 'is two arms stretches out o' his red togs—and they grows longer an' longer—quarter o' a mile long they grows—till 'is fists is close the my froat, the bilin in court noddin' their 'eds all the time, as much as to say, "That's right—go on—give it 'im!" an' when he reaches me he clutches me round the gullet and squeedges me wiv both 'ands till I'm fair choked—the crowd a-noddin' all the time, as if to say, "Just so; we quite agrees, go on!" An' just wen I feels I'm a-dyin' I gives a screech and wakes up shiverin' wiv cold an' all of a 'ot perspiration, like a bloomin' toad, wiv my 'art a-beatin' nineteen to the dozen!

Gilbert's first Sullivan success was legal—*The Trial by Jury*. His last play and his last success was also legal—*The Hooligan*.

Gilbert's opinion of the English censorship of plays, a subject of interest to every dramatist, is expressed in the evidence that he gave in 1909 before a Joint Committee of the Lords and the Commons. Gilbert was examined by Mr. Herbert Samuel, now Sir Herbert Samuel, the committee's chairman:

"Your long experience as a dramatic author has led you to some conclusions as to the Censorship?—I am strongly of opinion that there should be a Censor, and still more strongly of opinion that the responsibility of vetoing should not rest exclusively on his shoulders, but that there should be an appeal to a body consisting of one arbitrator appointed by the author, one by the Lord Chamberlain, and a third selected by those two. I submitted these views to the Home Secretary eighteen months ago in accordance with a resolution arrived at at a meeting of a dozen or so authors more or less of that opinion, some of whom believed that there should be no Censor, but agreed that if there was one the method suggested would be the best. I am not single in my opinion that there should be a Censor.

"Why do you think a Censor of some kind is desirable?—Because I think the stage is not the proper pulpit from which to disseminate doctrines possibly of Anarchy, Socialism, or Agnosticism, doctrines of adultery and of free-love, before an audience of all ages, sexes, conditions of life, and varied degrees of education. Moreover, I think that first-night audiences have as much claim to be protected from outrage as any that follow.

"Does the Censorship as constituted inflict injury on the drama?—I cannot say. I do not know the plays that have been censored. I only know those that have been passed.



"You are of opinion that if the Censorship were modelled in the way you suggest, no injury would be done?—I do not say that. But I think it would be an important protection to the author, while it would relieve the Censor from an intolerable responsibility and from the danger of ruining the hopes of rising authors.

"Would you say that such an appeal should be open in the case of a play not yet performed and also where the Examiner intervenes to stop the performance under special circumstances?—I think it would apply in both cases.

"I have in mind *The Mikado*?—I consider that it was an act of depredation to take my play, which was worth £10,000, and, without any communication with me, prevent its performance.

"But you would not wish to be a *casus belli*?—I really do not think that the Power concerned thought about it. The music of *The Mikado* was played on the Japanese warships at the very time the play was prohibited, and that was a sort of musical comment on the absurdity of the prohibition.

"With reference to the tribunal of appeal you suggest, by whom do you think the expenses should be borne?—In the event of the appeal being rejected, it should fall upon the author; if successful, it should fall upon the Lord Chamberlain; and in the event of there being contributory negligence on both sides, the costs should be apportioned. The procedure, in fact, would follow that of a court of law.

"Should the music-halls be allowed to produce anything they like?—The sketches they produce should, in my opinion, be censored, but I do not extend that to the songs. I don't see how every turn could be censored.

"Can a line be drawn in an Act of Parliament between a dramatic entertainment, a sketch at a music-hall, and other terms?—I am told that an Act of Parliament can do anything. I believe it might do even that. I would have some kind of censorship for the songs, but I do not see what kind of machinery can be applied.

"Do you think a line can be drawn between what is and what is not a dramatic entertainment?—I think that is a matter of fact. I will not suggest any means by which it should be done, but I do say that all performances which require licensing for the theatre should also require it for the music-hall.

"The law now draws a line between the buildings, and only the performances in theatres have to be submitted to the Censor?—I am not prepared to suggest how a sketch and an acting song are to be differentiated. But I suggest broadly that what is good for the theatre is good for the music-hall as regards dramatic performances.

"Do you think the legal distinction between the theatre and the music-hall should be maintained, or that there should be a general licence for the production by anybody of what he likes?—I certainly think the sketch should be under the control of the Lord Chamberlain.

"Do you think the music-halls should be free to produce any form

of entertainment they like?—I see no objection. It is true that the theatres might be in some degree injured, but they must take their chance. I see no reason why the existing legal distinction should be maintained.

"Cross-examined by LORD NEWTON. What occurred in the case of *The Mikado*?—As far as I know, it was this. I was informed that the Lord Chamberlain had forbidden the production of *The Mikado* on the ground that it might give offence to our Japanese allies. I was not communicated with by the Lord Chamberlain, there was no preliminary correspondence—there was some afterwards—he simply took my property and laid an embargo upon it. Subsequently I had an interview with Lord Althorp. The Censor, I understand, had nothing whatever to do with the matter.

"In fact, it was an autocratic action by the Lord Chamberlain?—Yes. Many years ago I had a difficulty with the Censor. It was in the case of *The Happy Land*. That was not written by me, but by à Beckett. I drew up the scenario for a private performance which was to take place on an Ash Wednesday at the old Prince of Wales' Theatre. Before that took place I read the scenario to Miss Lytton, the manageress of the Court Theatre, who said that she wanted it, but I told her that I could not let her have it, as it was written for a special performance. That performance, however, did not come off owing to a death, and I then gave the scenario to Miss Lytton, asking her not to name me as the author. The play ran a week before any alteration was insisted upon; but then the Lord Chamberlain or the Censor came down on it. My maturer judgment is that the interference was absolutely justified.

"You think the demand for the suppression of the Censorship proceeds from a limited number of men?—Yes, from a certain number, a limited number of people specially concerned.

"The hostility of the Censor is confined to a comparatively small number?—Decidedly.

"COLONEL LOCKWOOD. We have been told that as the law is sufficient to deal with a book on any subject which infringes propriety, the stage should be equally free. Would you distinguish between the stage and a book?—I should say there is a wide distinction between what is read and what is seen. For instance, in a novel you might read that Eliza slipped off her dressing-gown and stepped into her bath, and no harm would be done, but if that were represented on the stage it would be a very different matter.

"If there was an appeal from the Censor, it would strengthen the hand of the Censor and of the dramatic author?—Yes; it would be a benefit all round.

"ANSWERING LORD RIBBLESDALE, the witness said that although the numbers opposed to the Censorship were small, they were not a negligible minority, judged by the test of ability and talent. Men of the highest order of intelligence, he added, were opposed to the Censor-

ship. He therefore believed that although the professional hostile body was small, it was entitled to every respect because of its ability.

"By Mr. A. E. W. MASON, M.P. He favoured practising barristers as the tribunal of appeal, as he thought they would be the most independent men who could be selected for the purpose. They were more or less accustomed to forming a judicial opinion.

"LORD GORELL. Would that be a satisfactory tribunal to decide whether a play should be prohibited on political grounds?—I see no reason for supposing that it would not be satisfactory.

"Mr. R. HARCOURT. You said that a theatre was not a suitable place to deal with adultery and free-love. Do you mean to say that the theatre does not deal with such subjects?—Oh, certainly, it does deal with them, but the manner of dealing with them is very important. I have seen plays that I should have been sorry to have taken my daughter to, although such plays have been licensed. It appears to me that the intentions of the author may be admirable, but the audience requires to wade through a great deal of moral mud before they appreciate the author's intentions. If I may be allowed to use a domestic simile, it is a reversal of the nursery process of administering unpalatable medicines. In this case you are covering up the jam with the powder instead of covering up the powder with the jam.

"In reply to further questions, Sir William Gilbert expressed the opinion that a play should be open to subsequent consideration after it had been licensed, because so much of what might appear insignificant in the manuscript might have a deleterious effect in the presentation. For instance, if a strongly expressed love-scene took place between a man and a woman sitting apart, that might be nothing, but if they were sitting together on a sofa with their arms round each other's waists and the dialogue was punctuated with kisses, the effect might be very undesirable.

"Therefore a Censorship before production, unless followed up by rigid control and inspection, could not be said to be an efficient protection?—No; I should say not.

"It has been said that *Othello*, judged by an up-to-date standard, might not have been passed. What do you think of that?—I think it would have been passed, because even as it stands the question of adultery is treated very delicately, and in such a manner as not to inform any of the audience who are ignorant on the point and not to disgust those who are not.

"As to the relations between music-halls and theatres, his opinion was that what was not good enough for the theatre was not good enough for the music-hall.

"THE CHAIRMAN. You said that the theatre-going public was satisfied with the present system. Are there not many who might not be satisfied?—No doubt.

"What might be satisfactory to the public going to the Gaiety might not be satisfactory to the public that go to the Court Theatre

to see the Vedrenne-Barker plays?—Satisfactory as an intellectual achievement.

"Perhaps the great majority might be satisfied with the Censorship as it exists, but there may be an intellectual minority who constitute a theatre-going public of a different kind, which might be dissatisfied?—Quite."

Gilbert was certainly not numbered among the rebels against authority, but he did not bow to authority with enthusiasm. He said in a letter written in 1910: "I am fully in accord with those dramatists who consider that there should be an appeal from the decision of the Lord Chamberlain when it is adverse to the interests of the author."

A detailed survey of Gilbert's writings makes his right to be counted with the immortals abundantly clear. Comparing him with Dickens, Mr. Chesterton calls Gilbert "a smaller and more sneering but an equally sincere man." But Gilbert never sneered; he laughed, and, as no one knows better than Mr. Chesterton, the man who knows how to laugh is safe from the sinful sneer. Mr. Chesterton says: "In a song in *The Pirates of Penzance* he practically called policemen cowards. . . . In a song in *Patience* he directly accused the crack regiments of being common dandies; in another song in *The Pirates* he says plainly that our warriors understand everything but war. All this has been taken with a terrible levity—because it is true."

But it is not true. Policemen are not cowards, and the retreat from Mons and a dozen other modern heroic events disproved the too often repeated gibe that "our warriors understand everything but war." As a matter of fact, Gilbert never believed that policemen were timorous or that soldiers were incompetent. He knew, as Dickens knew, that policemen and soldiers and all other men and women are funny. To be comic is the mark of humanity, for, as we believe Mr. Chesterton himself has pointed out, no one ever saw a comic cow. This great fact gives the humorist his supreme importance. The topsy-turvy world is the real world after all.

## CHAPTER VII

### GILBERT IN THE THEATRE

GILBERT never had any doubt that the dramatist was the one man in the theatre who really mattered or who ought to matter. Although he had his antipathies—Sir Henry Irving was one of them—he had many actor and actress friends all through his life, but he would never dream of allowing any player, whether actor or actress, to interfere in the slightest degree with his own conception of a character or a scene. At the Savoy he ruled with a rod of iron. He once said in an interview with the late Bram Stoker :

“ I attribute our success in our particular craft to the fact that Arthur Sullivan and I were in a commanding position. We controlled the stage altogether, and were able to do as we wished, so far as the limitations of our actors would allow of it.”

Long before the Savoy days, when Gilbert was still a struggling dramatist, he fought fiercely against the player's invasion of what he properly regarded as the dramatists' domain, and there is no doubt that most of the most-discussed theatrical quarrels of his life were due to the reasonable resentment which all dramatists have felt for the emendations of the popular actor.

One of his quarrels was with Miss Henrietta Hodson, who afterwards married Henry Labouchère, the founder of *Truth*. The quarrel began in 1874, when Miss Hodson produced at the Royalty Theatre a comedy called *Ought we to visit her?* written by Gilbert in collaboration. It was revived when

*Pygmalion and Galatea* was produced in 1877. Miss Hodson published an open letter complaining of Gilbert's manner to players, and he responded with an equally forcible "Letter addressed to the Dramatic Profession."

The Kendals produced many of the Gilbert comedies, and the result was that he and they were not on speaking terms for nearly twenty years. Mrs. Kendal has been good enough to recall some of the incidents of an interesting partnership. Despite the quarrels, she emphasizes the fact of Gilbert's generosity. "He was," she says, "the most generous man I ever knew, and he had a poet's mind." Mrs. Kendal also, naturally, remembers Gilbert's debt to her brother, Tom Robertson, the author of *Castle*: "My brother gave Gilbert all his first chances"—a fact that Gilbert himself never forgot.

Talking of the production of *The Wicked World*, Mrs. Kendal says: "I threw down my part and said I would not go on because Gilbert tried to force me to do what I was not going to do. He had to give way." Mrs. Kendal really justifies Gilbert's irritation. It is easy to understand that a dramatist who possessed a quick temper and a proper regard for his craft did not give way to a leading actress with any very good grace. Gilbert was an excellent amateur actor, and he appeared at least once in a professional company. Still talking of *The Wicked World*, Mrs. Kendal says:

"One night, instead of the actor who was playing the part, Gilbert came up through the trap-door and took the part himself. He had quarrelled with the actor and had come to fisticuffs with him, and I am bound to say he had the best of it. The public never knew that the right actor was not appearing. At dress rehearsals he was often in front when we did not know he was there, and he would suddenly shout out: 'What on earth do you think you are doing?'"

The Kendals played the leading parts in *Pygmalion and Galatea*, Mrs. Kendal being the original Galatea. Mrs. Kendal admits that, angry as Gilbert could be on occasion, he invariably endeavoured quickly to make amends. This characteristic is brought out in a letter we have received from Miss Fanny Holland (Mrs. Arthur Law), who was in the cast of

*Topsy-Turvydom*, a short musical play which was part of the programme of the opening of the Criterion Theatre in 1874. Miss Holland says :

"We had been rehearsing very hard and very late, and were all desperately tired. I was singing my song when I came to a standstill in my words. Gilbert was very angry, and upset me so much that I was unable to continue for some time. He apologized, and we finished the rehearsal. But to show what a large-hearted man he was, though it was in the early hours of the morning, when he returned home, he wrote to me at once saying how grieved he was that he had upset me, and that he could not go to bed until he had made amends. I played in many of his pieces after that and we were always the best of friends."

The Bancrofts produced Gilbert's *Sweethearts* in 1874. In their *Recollections of Sixty Years* they remark on the skill with which he read and rehearsed his plays. In 1885, Miss Mary Anderson (Madame de Novarro) had a famous season at the Lyceum, during which she made a great success with a revival of *Pygmalion and Galatea*, in which Miss Julia Neilson made her first stage appearance as Cynisca. Gilbert's correspondence with Miss Anderson is particularly interesting. The first letter has a certain importance as showing the dramatist's business methods :

19, HARRINGTON GARDENS,  
SOUTH KENSINGTON,  
April 8, 1885.

MY DEAR MISS ANDERSON,—

I enclose a draft agreement, which, if you approve of it, please sign and return to me, and I will then send you a duplicate agreement, signed by me.

With regard to a new play to be written by me within twelve months, I am prepared to write such a play on the following terms :

The scenario, containing the plot and a description of the general course of the incidents, to be submitted to you for your approval within six months of this date. If you approve the general scheme of the piece as embodied in such a scenario, I am to complete the play (adhering generally, but not slavishly, to the scheme) within another six months. The piece to be yours for everywhere for five years for five thousand guineas—one thousand to be paid on approval of scenario, the balance on completion of the piece. This may seem to you a large sum—but it does not represent one-fifth of what you would willingly pay for a distinct success. The success cannot, of course, be

guaranteed, but earnest thoughtful labour, and considerable experience on my part, *can*. If you are disposed to entertain the question, let me know, and we will go thoroughly into the question.

Very truly yours,

W. S. GILBERT

The next letter is evidence that at times Gilbert would defer even to the opinion of an actress :

MY DEAR MISS ANDERSON,—

I am dreadfully distressed to think that I should have been (however involuntarily, the cause of disturbing your slumbers. But reassure yourself, *I cannot glare*. I don't know how it's done. The only cut in the *W.W.* that affects you is the one that I have marked, at the end of the book sent herewith. I fancy the piece will be better without the portion I have marked out. But herein, as in all other matters, I refer to your better judgment. . . .

With kindest regards,

Always truly yours,

W. S. GILBERT

In 1888, Miss Anderson revived *A Winter's Tale*. Gilbert wrote to her :

HARRINGTON GARDENS,

SOUTH KENSINGTON,

Feb. 17, '88.

MY DEAR MISS ANDERSON,—

I don't think the *Winter's Tale* a well-constructed piece, but I think your performance delightful beyond measure, and I shall take the greatest interest in seeing it again. I don't think you know the charm your acting has for me. . . .

My very kindest regards.

Always sincerely yours,

W. S. GILBERT

The next letter is interesting as showing Gilbert's high opinion of Miss Julia Neilson, then an unknown actress, whom, in a sense, he discovered.

HARRINGTON GARDENS,

SOUTH KENSINGTON,

Jan. 22, '88.

MY DEAR MISS ANDERSON,—

You said something about doing *Pygmalion and Galatea* for a week or two at the end of your season, with *Comedy and Tragedy*. If you have any such intention, I shall be glad to know of it, as I have found a



magnificent Cynisca—quite a novice at present—but whom I will train to play the part to perfection. She is a girl with extraordinary natural aptitude for the stage—in fact, the most remarkable novice I have ever seen. I am taking a great deal of pains with her, and I think she has a future before her. . . .

Always sincerely yours,  
W. S. GILBERT

When the strain of rehearsal was over, Gilbert never failed in appreciation :

HARRINGTON GARDENS,  
SOUTH KENSINGTON,  
*Dec. 7, '88.*

MY DEAR MISS ANDERSON,—

Now that our rehearsals are at last at an end I must thank you most heartily for the unvarying kindness you have shown me during their progress, and the patience and thorough good-humour with which you have entertained my suggestions. Whatever the result of to-morrow night's performance may be—and, as regards yourself, I feel sure that it will be brilliantly successful—I shall never forget the pleasure I have experienced in seeing my conception so exquisitely realized.

Believe me to remain,  
dear Miss Anderson,  
Very sincerely yours,  
W. S. GILBERT

But even admiration would not compel him to acquiesce in what seemed to him wrong readings of characters he had created.

HARRINGTON GARDENS,  
SOUTH KENSINGTON,  
*Feb. 27, 1888.*

MY DEAR MISS ANDERSON,—

I can't allow you to say that "I never cared much for your work." It is a reflection not on you, but on me, and one that I have not deserved. Are there so many actresses worthy of the name that one can afford to speak slightly of such as you? I delighted in Parthenia—in Pauline—in Clarice (the only parts, except Galatea, that I had seen you in). To certain passages in Galatea I took a critical exception—not to the talent you displayed in rendering them—not to your talent as an *actress*—but because they were rendered in a manner other than that in which I conceived them. What I have said of Galatea behind your back, that I have said to your face. I have too profound a respect for you and your art to butter you with empty

compliments. When I feel at all, I feel strongly—and your Hermione has blazed in my eyes ever since Saturday night, and made them *hot*. Perdita is lovely in her girlish grace, but Hermione is the highest expression of dramatic art. But enough of me and my opinions. I am getting old and talkative. . . .

With kindest regards,

Always most truly yours,

W. S. GILBERT

Writing of her association with Gilbert, Madame Novarro says :

“ My memories of Gilbert are sweet and bitter. He was a very kind-hearted man, but he did not want anybody to know it. For the most part, he was very kind in our dealings at the theatre, but he took offence very easily, and the result was that he used his great wit like a two-edged sword—often with sharp words. I am sure he was always sorry if he had hurt one. I could not help liking Gilbert, even though one was uncertain of him. I always had an idea he did not like Shakespeare's plays. When I was producing *A Winter's Tale* in London, he said to me : ‘ Of course, you will get full houses for a time, for the English public do not know the play, and as they are too lazy to read it, they will all go to see it—*once*. ’ I remember his love for the Drury Lane pantomime, and I remember going with him and his wife to an excellent pantomime produced by Sir Augustus Harris. Gilbert was, in his own words :

‘ A mass of contradictions,

A bundle of incongruities. ’

In his kind moods he was one of the most charming men imaginable. ”

No one in the theatre perhaps knew Gilbert so well as Miss May Fortescue. She acted in several of his pieces, and when she went into management she produced no less than nine of his plays, among them *The Fortune Hunter*, which led to the action “ Gilbert v. Ledger. ” Miss Fortescue made as great a personal success with *Galatea* in the provinces as Miss Mary Anderson made with it in London.

Miss Fortescue's recollections of Gilbert at rehearsal are of the happiest.

“ We never, ” she says, “ had an altercation at rehearsal or at any other time. I have seen Gilbert show the patience of Job towards honest stupidity ; but what he could not stand were the people who could do and wouldn't. His kindness was extraordinary. On wet nights when rehearsals were late and the last buses were gone, he

would pay the cab-fares of the girls whether they were pretty or not, instead of letting them trudge home on foot. In financial matters he was a great gentleman. We never had or needed a written agreement. He was practical and business-like, but incapable of petty meanness. He was just as large-hearted when he was poor as when he was rich and successful. For money as money he cared less than nothing. Gilbert was no plaster saint, but he was an ideal friend."

Gilbert had a craftsman's appreciation of another craftsman's deftness. Miss Fortescue recollects that once at a dinner-party, after some criticism of Pinero's *His House in Order*, Gilbert made an elaborate dissection of the play, emphasizing its faultless technique and expressing his strong admiration of Pinero's fine workmanship.

His relations with the company at the Savoy are pleasantly demonstrated in the following letters written to Miss Jessie Bond :

HARRINGTON GARDENS,  
SOUTH KENSINGTON,  
Jan. 19, 1884.

MY DEAR JESSIE,—

The moral of the whole thing is, come to me when you want anything, and if it's right you should have it, you *shall* have it.

You have played Melissa admirably.

Yours always,  
W. S. GILBERT

The next letter refers to the production of *The Pirates of Penzance* :

HARRINGTON GARDENS,  
SOUTH KENSINGTON,  
Feb. 11, 1886.

MY DEAR JESSIE,—

I have carefully considered how to improve the part of Edith (quite as much in our interests as in your own), and I don't see how the dialogue can be materially altered in such a way as to do you any real good. Padding out the few sentences that follow the entrance of the girls would be of no use to you—the situation scarcely admits of amplification, does it? Of course, I could add a couple of pages of dialogue about papa and the mermaids and so forth, but it would be obvious padding, and nothing else. My difficulty is increased by Sullivan being abroad, for he might have consented to a song, to precede Frederick's entrance from the cave—and I would gladly have

written such a song—but he is at Monaco, and quite unlikely to work. Indeed, I will write such a song with pleasure, if you think my doing so would satisfy you, and if you will take your chance of Sullivan's setting it. I suppose you could sing both the verses "Let us gaily tread" and "Far away from toil and care." I should be delighted if you would. I am writing so particularly good a part for you in the new piece, that I should be distressed beyond measure if you should leave us. *I've never said as much as this to any other actor or actress before.* I don't say it to induce you to play so insignificant a part as Edith, for if you left us now, and came back to us to play that part, I should be satisfied. But if you didn't play it, my calculations would be all upset, and I should lose a dear little lady for whom I have always had a very special regard.

Always affectionately yours,  
W. S. GILBERT

HARRINGTON GARDENS,  
Jan. 16, '88.

MY DEAR JESSIE,—

I am very sorry indeed to hear you have been so ill. I've been confined (to the house) myself for some weeks past, and had no idea your illness was so serious. I heard all about it from your sister on Saturday, and I was about to write to you, but I couldn't remember your number in Chancery Lane.

I hope your health will benefit by a little sea-sidism. I shall be very glad, indeed, to see you back again—the Savoy is not itself without you.

Always affectionately yours,  
W. S. GILBERT

His admiration and appreciation for Miss Bond were deep and sincere, but the many-sided Gilbert had his definite business side. This letter shows it:

BREAKSPEARE,  
UXBRIDGE,  
Sept. 22, 1889.

MY DEAR JESSIE,—

I am distressed to learn that you decline to renew under £30 a week—distressed because, though nobody alive has a higher appreciation of your value as a most accomplished artist than I, no consideration would induce me to consent to such a rise.

While I do not forget how much of the success of our pieces has been due to you, *you* must not forget how much of your success has been due to the parts written for you by Sullivan and myself—you have been most carefully measured by both of us, and, I think you will admit, not unsuccessfully.

Finally, it would distress me greatly to lose you after so many years' association, undisturbed, as far as I am concerned, by a single unpleasantness, but I cannot let personal regard and esteem blind me to the fact that my partners have to be considered.

I hope for your own sake (for engagements lasting 12 or 13 years, with parts written expressly for you, don't turn up every day) that you will reconsider the matter. I hope for your own sake you will not deprive us of the services of an artist whom we all regard with an affection which is quite apart from business considerations.

Yours affectionately,

W. S. GILBERT

The cloud soon blew away and the affection remained.

GRIM'S DYKE,

HARROW WEALD,

*Aug. 15, 1894.*

MY DEAR JESSIE,—

Thank you for your note. I was afraid you were angry with me, and didn't want to be brought in contact with me. I am very glad it is not so. I look upon no piece that I am connected with as complete unless you are in the cast, and I have fought hard for you at the Savoy. The part—always an extremely good one—has been improved for your benefit, and I am sure you will be pleased with it.

Yours always,

W. S. GILBERT

GRIM'S DYKE,

HARROW WEALD,

*Nov. 16, '94.*

MY DEAR JESSIE,—

Your lovely present has just arrived, and I can't thank you sufficiently for it. I shall always prize it very highly as a souvenir of most pleasant and (to me) most profitable associations, extending over many years. Was it a coincidence or was it intentional that it arrived on the eve of my 25th birthday. I hope you will never look older than that picture represents you to be—you certainly don't *now*.

Always affectionately yours,

W. S. GILBERT

GRIM'S DYKE,

HARROW WEALD,

*Jan. 4, '95.*

MY DEAR JESSIE,—

You are the dearest and kindest little lady in the world—you know instinctively what one most wants, and you get it and send it on as a matter of course. I can't have too many jessies (no capital)

about the place. I have 8 already besides those you've given me. All the associations connected with her are delightful, and I can't have too much or too many of her.

I shall be at the theatre (D.V.) to-morrow night.

Always afftly yours,

W. S. GILBERT

Miss Bond has a delightful story of Gilbert's kindness to her when she was for seven months incapacitated by an accident to her ankle. At the time he was writing *Iolanthe*, and one afternoon he came to see Miss Bond to tell her he was writing a special part for her in the opera. "You will not have to dance and hardly to move, and as you are always laughing, I have written a song to show you can be serious when you have the chance." The song was, of course, "He loves," and proved one of the successes of the opera. "Little fool!" was Gilbert's remark when Miss Bond told him she was going to marry. But her reply was unanswerable: "I have often heard you say you don't like old women. I shall be one soon. Will you provide for me? You hesitate. Well, I am going to a man who will."

The Savoy career of Miss Decima Moore, now Lady Guggisberg, was brief but triumphant. She made a great success in the production of *The Gondoliers*, leaving the Savoy company after the breach between composer and librettist, which followed that production. Miss Moore won Gilbert's heart by her pronunciation of English, a point about which he was most sensitive. She remembers him as very kind and very patient, always quick to recognize earnest effort, equally quick in correcting any mistakes.

Mr. Edward German, with whom Gilbert collaborated after the breach with Sullivan, describes him as generous, reasonable, and broad-minded.

Miss Isabel Jay, who joined the Savoy Company in 1901 in the revival of *Iolanthe*, tells us that her experience of Gilbert at rehearsals was that he was always considerate and delightful. It is probable, of course, that after the original productions of the Savoy operas the author's instructions

had been so carefully noted that they had become immovable traditions. At the first rehearsal that Miss Jay attended Gilbert was carried into the theatre in an invalid chair. He was crippled with gout, and the company trembled. Miss Jay was comforted when she was told that when he had the gout, Gilbert's temper was positively angelic, but when he was well it was apt to be a little trying. "I can only conclude," she says, "that he always had gout when he rehearsed me."

Gout was Gilbert's constant enemy. In May, 1893, he wrote to D'Oyly Carte:

"I have been laid up with a most violent attack of gout in both feet and in the right hand, so I have not been able to do anything but swear for the last eighteen days."

During the rehearsals of *Utopia Limited* in 1893, he was crippled. He says in a letter to Mrs. Carte:

"I am sorry to say I have had a bad relapse and am now completely crippled. I am sending up to town for a pair of crutches, so that I may be enabled to turn up at the reading on Thursday."

On some occasions, as Miss Isabel Jay remembers, he had to be carried on the stage. He used to make his own elaborate arrangements to meet the difficulty:

"I will drive straight to the side-door in Beaufort Buildings. My man will be with me and will help me down on to the stage. I am sending a wheel-chair (the same that I used in rehearsing *Utopia*), and I shall be glad if you will allow this to be on the stage for my use. I am also sending a carrying-chair to take me up the steps from the stage to the side-door in Beaufort Buildings. I can manage to walk downstairs, but (when I am tired) I can't walk upstairs."

Mr. Percy Anderson, who designed the dresses for many of the Savoy productions, protests that Gilbert was always considerate, sympathetic, and understanding. He took infinite pains to indicate what he wanted done, and was full of appreciation when the work was completed. "I never had the slightest unpleasantness with Gilbert from the beginning to the end of our connection," says Mr. Anderson. Their professional association was, perhaps, made easier by the

fact that they had many mutual friends, including Miss Beatrice de Michele, to whom Gilbert wrote some of the letters quoted in the next chapter.

In 1904, Mr. Arthur Bourchier and Miss Violet Vanbrugh produced the last of the Gilbert comedies, *The Fairy Dilemma*, at the Garrick Theatre, and his appreciation was shown in two very cordial letters :

GRIM'S DYKE,  
HARROW WEALD,  
Aug. 2, 1904.

MY DEAR MRS. BOURCHIER,—

I am very sorry we are not to see you before you go away. It seems as if we were destined to meet under the most formal insincere circumstances. Anyhow, I hope you will have a very pleasant time at the seaside, and that it will thoroughly set you up again, for you must have had a very trying season. . . .

The rehearsals of *The Fairy* teemed with pleasant associations, and I shall never forget the kind consideration and invaluable assistance I received from yourself and your husband. The piece came too late—it should have been produced forty years ago, and then people would have appreciated its intention.

But then I should not have enjoyed the advantage of seeing you play Angela.

With kindest regards,  
I am always,  
Sincerely yours,  
W. S. GILBERT

GRIM'S DYKE,  
HARROW WEALD,  
Dec. 13, 1906.

MY DEAR BOURCHIER,—

It's an absolutely unimportant matter to you, but a very important one to me, that I should have omitted to include your name and Mrs. Bourchier's in my list of actors whose assistance at rehearsal I should greatly value. Of course, you know how highly I esteem you both, and I can only account for my omission by the fact that in hurriedly running my eye down the "Under the Clock" advertisements in *The Times*, I did not find yours and Mrs. Bourchier's and I had only about half an hour to write it (last Sunday), for I had to send it to the D.T. by my coachman (as I was anxious it should appear with the *Yeomen* notices on Monday) without an opportunity of revising it.

I know perfectly well that in your allusion to the omission last



## 164 W. S. GILBERT: HIS LIFE AND LETTERS

night you were only joking, but it is no joke to me that I have appeared to slight two old friends for whose professional ability I, in common with all others, have the highest regard.

Always sincerely yours,

W. S. GILBERT

How sincerely Gilbert could appreciate another man's work is shown by the following letter written to the late Captain Robert Marshall after the production of his comedy, *The Royal Family*, in 1899 :

GRIM'S DYKE,

HARROW WEALD,

Oct. 15, 1899.

DEAR CAPTAIN MARSHALL,—

I congratulate you sincerely on your success of last night. The piece is very brightly and wittily written, and, I think and hope, is sure of a run. The whole of Act 1 and the latter scenes of Act 2 especially impressed me.

I may, perhaps, be permitted to suggest that some of the scenes between the Cardinal and the priest would bear compression as being a little out of harmony with the airy character of the comedy scenes. And I think the Minister of Police and his subordinate were, on the other hand, played a little too grotesquely.

Very truly yours,

W. S. GILBERT

This letter, it will be noted, was written to a beginner, by the accepted master of their craft, and it is by no means an isolated incident. After seeing one of his plays that had been severely and, as Gilbert thought, unfairly criticized, he wrote to Mr. Alfred Sutro, whom he had never met, a warm letter of appreciation, and in a letter to Rowland-Brown, referring to a play by Mr. Louis Parker, he says: "I have read *The Happy Life*, which I will return in a day or two. It is brightly and feelingly written and with a good eye to unhackneyed stage effect."

Perhaps it is true that Gilbert had little love for dramatic critics. Few dramatists have. In common with all the stage celebrities of his day, he had his quarrels with Clement Scott, whose articles in the *Daily Telegraph* influenced the public and the box-office as those of no other newspaper critic

have ever influenced them. But he quickly forgot and forgave. Gilbert was incapable of rancour. Most hot-tempered men are. For one critic, at least, Mr. William Archer, he had a great liking and respect, recognizing his fairness and respecting his judgments.

## CHAPTER VIII

### GILBERT'S FRIENDSHIPS

IN his earlier days, Gilbert's friendships were for the most part in the world in which he lived and worked. He was intimate with the Bancrofts and the Terrys, particularly with Kate Terry (Mrs. Lewis). In the later years of his life, Gilbert had few intimate men-friends, although his guests at Grim's Dyke were many and varied. Indeed, the only men of a younger generation with whom he was ever on close terms of friendship were the late Henry Rowland-Brown, the late Robert Marshall, and Cyril Maude. On the other hand, he had many particularly charming friendships with women, and his letters to them are a remarkable revelation of character.

"*I know* he liked women of brains; he used to say so to me," insists one of his friends. He had an artist's admiration for beauty, but the brainless beauty bored him. One worker in whose artistic career he was keenly interested was the gifted Liza Lehmann, to whom he gave all the assistance in his power over the production of her opera, *The Vicar of Wakefield*. He offered, too, to write a libretto for Madame Lehmann to set.

To Liza Lehmann's sister, Mrs. Barry Pain, whose one novel and playlets are but a pale reflex of her personality, he gave the palm as the best conversationalist of his own wide circle. And we have it on the authority of Mrs. Lewis that Lady Tree, a woman of many brilliant parts, was the person who always excited Gilbert to his most sparkling talk.

Probably one of the strongest tenets of Gilbert's creed was the faith that the imitative art of acting can be perfected by instruction without inspiration. The Jane Austen insistence that "we all love to instruct" forcibly applied to him. He was prodigal of advice and help wherever he saw—or believed he saw—talent, nor was his lavish assistance confined to his own companies. More than one popular actress owe their fame and fortune entirely to Gilbert's tuition. Among others, the late beautiful Lily Hanbury always acknowledged with gratitude her debt to his discerning intervention. Failures were inevitable. He met more than one such "ungrateful little cat," to use his own term in a letter written in 1903.

"I have discovered the loveliest girl in the world. She is on the Stage, and quite inexperienced, but with a good deal of dramatic aptitude. I've taken her in hand, and got her an engagement at five pounds a week at the Criterion, and a further engagement at the Haymarket in the autumn. Not a bad beginning for a young girl who (until she met me) had not a friend in the dramatic profession. I am sorry to say she is an ungrateful little cat, and looks upon all I have done for her as in the natural order of things."

Yet, despite the little cats, he never ceased to enjoy the bending of the theatrical twig at the expense of much time and money.

Gilbert was a voluminous letter-writer. He wrote quickly and clearly, and showed a notable, if ironic, courtesy, even in his replies to begging letters. He had no sort of idea that his autograph was of any value, and indeed at no time in his life had he much faith in the continuance of his fame. "I fancy," he once said, "that posterity will know as little of me as I shall of posterity." At times he wrote in a whirlwind of wrath, and this usually occurred when it seemed to him that his friends had been unfairly attacked. His mastery of English shows to the utmost advantage in many of his letters, though he was apt to make his own laws, and he delighted in the often condemned parenthesis. Generally, the shorter the note, the better the wording. To a request for

a subscription to a charity he wrote: "I can but do your bidding. Yours obediently, W.S.G."

Like Thackeray, Gilbert wrote his best letters to his best friends, and the resemblance to the novelist is perhaps most notable in the letters to Mrs. Talbot, which recall those that Thackeray wrote to Mrs. Brookfield. It is unfortunate that many hundreds of letters written by Gilbert have been destroyed, among them long and interesting series written to Mrs. Perugini and Miss Fortescue. Mrs. Sofia Whitburn, who began her friendship with Gilbert as a little child, deplors the burning of a collection "illustrated like the *Babs*."

As a letter-writer, Gilbert rarely dropped into poetry. He once told the late Rowland-Brown that he had never written any love-verses to anyone, "or indeed any other verse for which I have not been well paid." As we have read, the most interesting series of Gilbert letters were addressed to Mrs. Talbot. The first note was written in 1894, and the last shortly before Gilbert's death in 1911. Mrs. Talbot was often an invalid, and she says: "I think our friendship began in pure pity for me." There was no blood-relationship between them. Mrs. Talbot's mother was American, and the word cousin was used in a sort of teasing friendship. The real Gilbert is in his letters. They are characterized by an old-world chivalry. They are whimsical, sympathetic, sometimes indignant, always Gilbert. Were there no other Gilbertian in existence, the letters to Mrs. Talbot alone would be an admirable summary of the dramatist's character. Mrs. Talbot had a pleasant habit of writing birthday letters, and here are Gilbert's replies:

GRIM'S DYKE,  
HARROW WEALD,  
Nov. 20, 1894.

MY DEAR MRS. TALBOT,—

It is worth while to be fifty-eight in order to receive so kindly an expression of goodwill from a lady whose goodwill I most highly value.

Always most truly yours,  
W. S. GILBERT

GRIM'S DYKE,  
HARROW WEALD,  
Nov. 19, '98.

MY DEAR MRS. TALBOT,—

It reconciles me to being sixty-two to receive so kind a letter from you. I would willingly be sixty-two for ever so many years to come on the same terms. I am sorry you are not coming to England till the middle of January, as we shall be going to London about that time.

Probably we shall go to the Crimea again in April, as we found it extremely interesting. There is a seaside resort—Yalta, which is one of the loveliest places I ever saw. We had magnificent weather all the way both out and at home. Wherever we went we found a wet day had just preceded us—in fact, we were chivying a wet day all round the Mediterranean and all round the Black Sea.

We caught it up at last at Algiers, where it *did* rain. The ship was full of fussy old ladies and gouty old gentlemen—I called them "The Old Curiosity Shop," which annoyed the old guys, who wanted to know what I called myself. However, I never spent a more blameless six weeks.

Always affectionately yours,  
W. S. GILBERT

GRIM'S DYKE,  
HARROW WEALD,  
Nov. 18, '99.

MY DEAR MRS. TALBOT,—

How kind of you to remember my birthday! I am already uncomfortable owing to shortbread and a box of chocolates sent me by another sympathizer, but I would rather be bilious through their kind attentions than perfectly well without them.

They came to console me for growing older—and the worst of it is, that the older I grow the more consolation I shall need—and I'm not at all sure that in this case the demand will create the supply.

Affectionately yours (May I?),  
W. S. GILBERT

GRIM'S DYKE,  
HARROW WEALD,  
Nov. 19, 1902.

MY DEAR COUSIN MARY,—

Thank you very much for your good wishes. It is a great lark being sixty-six—you try it. It is so delightful to have attained a time of life when one can feel quite sure that there is not the remotest chance of one's being a snake on another man's hearth. One feels

## 170 W. S. GILBERT: HIS LIFE AND LETTERS

so safe and (involuntarily) good. I am slowly getting stronger, but I am still rather Richardy (I hate the slang expression "Dickey") in the knees. If my left knee were as good as my right knee, all would be well. It would even be well if my right knee were as bad as my left knee, because they would at any rate be pairs. However, I can walk five miles at a pinch. My steam-car is going strong, and I hope I shall be able to give you a good spin when you come here. (Song for a lady motor-drover, "*La donna e auto-mobile*"). . . .

Your aff.

COUSIN BILL

GRIM'S DYKE,

HARROW WEALD,

Nov. 18, 1903.

MY DEAR COUSIN MARY,—

I thank you heartily for so kindly remembering my birthday. It is very pleasant to be 67, because one feels one is approaching one's prime. I look upon 70 as the prime of life. After 70 I don't want any congratulations, but condolences.

What do you think of the following, which is absolutely true? An English governess went to Paris to recover some property, and she arrived on the last day of the Commune. As she turned into the Rue Clichy, she was horrified to find herself in front of a barricade, on the top of which was a 12-pounder gun surrounded by Communists, one of whom was about to apply a match to the touch-hole. She rushed into a porte-cochère in great alarm. A French gentleman who was passing said: "*N'ayez pas peur, Mademoiselle, il n'y a pas de danger.*" "*Mais on va tirer un coup de canon!*" "*Pardon, Mademoiselle,*" said the Frenchman, "*ce n'est rien, on se pose pour la photographie.*" And then she saw a man with a camera focussed on the group. It seems to me delightfully French. . . .

Kindest regards to your husband.

Always your affectionate

COUSIN BILL.

GRIM'S DYKE,

HARROW WEALD,

Nov. 19, 1904.

MY DEAR COUSIN MARY,—

It was delightful to see your welcome handwriting again, and very kind of you to remember my birthday. Personally, I'm sick of birthdays, I've had so many of them, and they begin to pall (but such is the inconsistency of the animal man), I feel I could do with a few more. Still, I wish it was *my* fortieth and not my sixty-eighth! Don't *you* mind being forty. You've been in the pride and glow of lovely

life for the last twenty years, and you will be delightful to look at and talk to twenty years hence.

As it is, I never think of you as more than five-and-twenty.

Good-bye, dear Cousin Mary, best love from us all.

Always yours aff.,

COUSIN BILL

GRIM'S DYKE,

HARROW WEALD,

Nov. 19, 1905.

MY VERY, VERY DEAR COUSIN MARY,—

You are a dear to write me so charming a letter on the occasion of my doleful anniversary. Such a letter tends to grease the wheels of the creaking old machine as it goes lumbering down the hill. I have had many letters of condolence, but none that has given me so much comfort as yours.

Can't get anyone to play croquet with me, so I have to resort to long walks. The other day I walked to London—not bad for a crumbly old josser of 69. By the way, I think this will be my last year on earth—you see, I am popularly identified with Topsy-turvydom. Now 69 is still 69 if you turn it upside down. See? The same remark applies to 96. So if I escape this year I may go on to the higher figure.

Good-bye, my most dear cousin.

Always your attached and affectionate

COUSIN BILL

In the autumn of 1899, Mrs. Talbot was in Scotland:

GRIM'S DYKE,

HARROW WEALD,

Sept. 9, '99.

MY DEAR MRS. TALBOT,—

Why does the Almighty make delightful people, and then make them go and live at Dunbar? It is as though I were to write a masterpiece of a play and then stipulate that it should only be performed at the Theatre Royal, Spitzbergen. Who but such as you would have thought of sending me that delightful shortbread? And who but I would have eaten so much of it yesterday as to be quite uncomfortably bilious to-day? A feeling as though I had a tablespoonful of warm oil at the back of my throat. But I don't mind being ill when it comes of your kind thought of me.

Always yours,

W. S. GILBERT

The following letters were written during a holiday in



Egypt. The first letter refers to a particularly bad attack of gout :

GRAND HOTEL,  
HELONASS, CAIRO,  
*Dec. 30, 1900.*

MY DEAR COUSIN MARY,—

In the first place, let me tell you that I am writing under three serious disabilities. Morning service is proceeding in the room beneath me, and I cannot collect my ideas when Gregorian chants are going on (I suppose it is the inherent piety of my nature which asserts itself in spite of myself). Then a gale of wind is blowing my paper about (I am writing in the open air); and lastly, I am tormented by a plague of flies, which settle on my face and hands and will not be denied. I am sorry to say I cannot give a good account of myself. I am just as great a cripple as when I left England. We have had an unprecedented amount of rain, five wet days last week, and I have serious thoughts of starting for Margate, which is drier, cheaper, and more bracing than this place. People here say that they have never known so much rain to fall in Helouam—as much fell last Sunday as in the whole of last year. I really have no luck. I have not left the hotel except to be wheeled to the sulphur-baths, which are rotten-eggy and do not seem to do me the slightest good. I am afraid I must reconcile myself to the prospect of being a cripple for life. In fact, the doctor here told me that he very much doubted if I should ever recover the use of my limbs. However, I'm not going to howl about it. I know, from your example, how delightful one may be, despite a drawback of that nature, and how much enjoyment may be drawn from one's life under such conditions. But I should like to be able to wash the back of my neck. It is not a lofty aspiration, but at present it is the goal of my ambitions.

I am always your affectionate  
COUSIN BILL

GRAND HOTEL,  
HELONASS,  
*Feb. 18, 1901.*

MY DEAR COUSIN MARY,—

We had a frightfully narrow escape from destruction last Thursday. We all went by train to Cairo (my first excursion from the hotel), and when within about six miles of our destination, the engine ran off the rails and tumbled down a steep embankment, dragging a third-class carriage with it and leaving our carriage half on and half off the embankment. We were in a long saloon carriage, and we felt a terrific bump which sent us flying forward half the length of the carriage on to our faces. This was succeeded by a dozen more bumps of greater force, and we were all tossed about the carriage like parched peas in

a drum. The engine, we found, was on its side alongside our carriage, and vomiting steam in great volumes. I was quite helpless, being unable to get up owing to my knees, and we expected the carriage to roll on to the engine, when I should certainly have been boiled alive in the steam. However, the carriage remained on the slope, and Nancy, by a tremendous effort, managed to get me on to my legs (my wife and she having got out in safety), and I also managed to descend. My wife had a bad bruise on the knee, and I had a very bad graze on the shin, with a bruise ten inches long and six wide—so that I am more of a cripple than ever. Seven people were killed and about twenty wounded—nearly all the occupants of the third-class carriage near the engine. Nancy was most plucky. She got up into the carriage again, collected all our traps, and finding that my hat had been shot through the window near the engine (on the further side from where we were), she clambered down and rescued it—seeing a frightfully crushed man near by, a sight my wife and I happily escaped. Nancy then set off in the boiling sun to walk two and a half miles to old Cairo to get a carriage. She succeeded in this (after having being hustled by a crowd of low-class Arabs), and returned to the scene of the accident. I shall never forget the shrieks of the wounded and dying, and we saw some awful sights into the bargain. We are none of us materially the worse for our adventure. Both ladies behaved with extraordinary pluck and self-possession. My wife's knee is practically well. It's extraordinary that, chucked about as I was, my knees were never touched.

Always your affectionate

COUSIN BILL

Nancy was, of course, Miss McIntosh, the leading lady in *Utopia Limited* and *Fallen Fairies*, and the constant friend and companion of Gilbert and Lady Gilbert. Happily, the doctors were quite wrong concerning the trouble with Gilbert's legs. He entirely recovered and was active until his death. The next letter is an example of Gilbert's habit of interspersing his letters with more or less original stories :

GRIM'S DYKE,

HARROW WEALD,

Dec. 25, 1901.

MY DEAR COUSIN MARY,—

I am very grieved to hear you have been ill again. I fondly hoped that all the trouble was done for good and all. When I think of all you have had to suffer, I feel such a cowardly brute for complaining of my own twaddling grievances. I can't write an amusing letter, because my joints are full of rheumatism just now. The cold has got

into them and I am a growling cripple. I read the other day of an Irish lady who married a man she didn't like, and when asked why she married him, she replied that she did so entirely that the poor little innocents who (she felt sure) would some day be born to her, should have some one to look after them and protect them if she should die during their infancy. I call that very subtle. . . .

Your affectionate

COUSIN BILL

In 1902, Gilbert bought his first motor-car. He wrote to Mrs. Talbot :

GRIM'S DYKE,  
HARROW WEALD,  
Oct. 6, 1902.

MY DEAR COUSIN MARY,—

It was a real pleasure to me to see your handwriting again. It is long since I wrote to you, and I would have written again without waiting for your answer but that I feared I might be troublesome. I am slowly—very slowly—getting better of my arthritis, but my knees are still dicky and my wrists weak. Otherwise I am wonderfully well. I dare say you've read in the papers that I've taken to motoring, and that I made my début by spoiling a parson who came round from under a dead wall on a bicycle. He was pretty badly hurt. The car was turned over at a ditch. I was pitched over the dashboard on to my head (I saw many stars of beautiful colours and was quite sorry when they vanished), and my wife was pitched very comfortably into a hedge, where she looked like a large and quite unaccountable bird's-nest. The car is a steam one—a Locomobile—an American one in honour to yourself. . . .

I heard a nice story the other day. A lady wanted a page, and another lady sent her a boy on approval. The first lady declined to engage the boy, as he was covered (as far as she could see ; she only saw his face and hands, being a very respectable lady) with red spots with little yellow centres that seemed to want pricking. The second lady was annoyed at the rejection of her protégé, so the first lady wrote : " I like a manly man and I like a womanly woman, but I can't stand a boyly boy."

Always affectionately yours,

COUSIN BILL

The motor continued to be a contrivance of accident and adventure.

GRIM'S DYKE,  
HARROW WEALD,  
Dec. 21, 1902.

MY DEAR COUSIN MARY,—

It is always delightful to hear you speak, even at the end of a telephone wire. . . . We have had several very jolly runs about the country in the car. Yesterday we went to Chesham, lunched there and returned, all in three hours. We seem fated, however, to cause disaster. On Thursday, although we were only creeping on at two miles an hour, we caused a horse, which was driven in a trap by two ladies, to shy up a bank. The trap was all but capsized. One lady was thrown out and run over; the groom was also thrown out, and the trap went over his hand; and the horse then bolted with the other lady, but was eventually stopped without damage. Happily the lady who was run over was not much hurt. She good-humouredly explained it was "only her legs." She seemed, from her way of speaking, to have but a poor opinion of those limbs, and Nancy (who saw them) said they were not up to much. The ladies both said it was the horse's fault, as we were going as slowly as a wheelbarrow and showing no steam. Yesterday a tipsy man rushed out from behind a cart and was knocked down by the car. He apologized with drunken profusion of etiquette. This is the third accident we have had, and in each case have been held blameless by the damaged people. . . .

I am always your affectionate  
BILL

On occasion Gilbert would write a letter merely to repeat a good story.

GRIM'S DYKE,  
HARROW WEALD,  
Aug. 24, 1903.

MY EXTREMELY DEAR COUSIN,—

I heard a good story of the late Bishop of London the other day. He went in a hansom from Victoria St. to Fulham Palace, and on arrival gave the cabby his exact fare, 2s. 6d. The cabman, who was very respectful, said: "I beg your pardon, my Lord, but if St. Peter had been on earth, do you suppose he would only have given me 2s. 6d.?" "My good fellow, if St. Peter had been on earth, he would have been at Lambeth and you would only have had a shilling." Not so bad for a mere bishop. Now, to show my perfect fairness, I'll tell an R.C. story about Father Healy. A young lady said to him: "Is it true, Father Healy, you have no mistletoe in Ireland?" "Alas, my dear," replied Healy, "it is only too true." "But," said the girl, "if young ladies can't kiss under the mistletoe, what can they do?" "Why, they do it under the rose," said Healy. Not so bad for a mere parish

priest. I am thinking of going to the Crimea in October, if I can find a male companion of a congenial disposition, but so far the desired article hasn't turned up.

Good-bye, my extremely dear Cousin Mary.

Always your aff.

COUSIN BILL

The topsy-turvydom of the operas sometimes creeps into the letters.

GRIM'S DYKE,

HARROW WEALD,

Sept. 24, 1903.

MY DEAR COUSIN MARY,—

Did you know Mabel Turner? She was married yesterday to Dugdale of the 18th Hussars, with much pomp and ceremony. I can't understand why so much fuss is made over a partnership, or rather I don't understand why the process should not be applied to all partnerships. It seems to me that the union (say) of Marshall & Snelgrove might, and should have, been celebrated in the same fashion. Marshall waiting at the altar for Snelgrove to arrive (dressed in summer stock remnants), a choir to walk in front of Snelgrove chanting, a Bishop and a Dean (and also a Solicitor) to ratify the deed of partnership, and a bevy of coryphée fitters-on to strew flowers in their path. It is a pretty idea, and invests a contract with a solemnity not to be found in a solicitor's or conveyancer's chambers.

Always, my dear Cousin,

Affly. yours,

COUSIN BILL

Gilbert was himself a good business man, reaping fully where he had sown, and he was always indignant when other authors and their dependents did not receive for their work an ample pecuniary return. He says in a letter to Mrs. Talbot, dated October 13, 1905: "It is a shameful thing that copyrights should expire—it ought to be freehold like land."

In the autumn of 1905 the Gilberts went to Italy and Switzerland. At one hotel where they had booked apartments they were disgusted to find that there were no rooms for them, and Gilbert afterwards discovered that the mysterious behaviour of the manager, to whom he referred in a letter to Mrs. Talbot as "the Belle Vue beast," was owing to the fact that one of his deadly enemies was stopping in the hotel, and, indeed,

had an interest in it. The deadly enemy was a well-known Radical politician, and Gilbert wrote to Mrs. Talbot :

" I never could understand his hostility (except that he is the avowed enemy of the whole human race) until I remembered that thirty-seven years ago I introduced him to the woman who is now his wife ! I admit that, quite unwittingly, I did him an irreparable injury, and am disposed to regard his hostility in some measure justified."

The lemurs at Grim's Dyke were a continual interest. Gilbert writes :

We have had a most interesting occurrence in our household. A baby, quite unexpectedly, has been born—to whom do you think ?—to our two lemurs ! It is the rarest possible thing for ring-tailed lemurs to breed in captivity. The Sec. to the Zoological Gardens, to whom I wrote on the subject, tells me that such a thing has not happened since 1881. The baby is an exact miniature of the mother in every respect, covered with fur and with an extremely long tail ; in fact, exactly like a full-grown lemur, but only as big as a newly born kitten. It clings all day to its mother (who is quite as active with it as before). It seems quite strong and well, and I expect it will live. . . .

Ever your aff.

COUSIN BILL

Very occasionally Gilbert breaks his own rule and drops into verse :

GRIM'S DYKE,  
HARROW WEALD,  
*Sept. 7.*

MY DEAR COUSIN MARY,—

I made a Limerick yesterday :

" When I asked a young girl of Portrush,  
' What book do you read ? ' she said, ' Hush !  
I have happened to chance  
On a novel from France,  
And I hope it will cause me to blush.' "

That ought to get the £500 prize. Here's another :

" There was a far-famed individdle  
Who had a bad pain in his middle,  
But a gentle cmetic  
With Lamplough's Pyretic  
Soon made him as fit as a fiddle."

Then another :

“ There was a young girl of Calcutta  
 Who anointed herself with salt butter.  
 She looked very well,  
 But they say that the smell  
 Was too utterly, utterly, utter ! ”  
 Ever your faithful

COUSIN BILL

The following letter is an illustration of Gilbert's deep regard for his friends :

GRIM'S DYKE,  
 HARROW WEALD,  
*July 24, 1906.*

MY VERY DEAR COUSIN MARY,—

I am—we all are—greatly relieved to learn that the operation has been so successfully performed, and that the invalid has borne it so well. I've a hideous way of identifying myself with incidents of the kind when I know they are going to take place, and at 9—10—11 I couldn't help fancying—now the surgeons have arrived—now they are being shown into the room—now they are unpacking their devilish instruments, and so on. . . . I wished I hadn't known when it was going to take place. . . .

God bless you.

Your affectionate

COUSIN BILL

As he grew older, his joy in friendship became greater and greater :

GRIM'S DYKE,  
 HARROW WEALD,  
*Dec. 3, 1908.*

MY DEAREST COUSIN MARY,—

Your delightfully long letter gave me more pleasure than I can express. It is an infinite boon to possess, at the fag-end of a long life, a dear friend who can enter into and sympathize with one's pleasures, cares, and troubles. Men of my age are like trees in late autumn—their friends have died away as the leaves have fallen from the trees ; but it is enough for me to feel assured that there is at least one friend who will stick to me to the very end.

I am, while I live,  
 Your devoted and affectionate

COUSIN BILL

Again, in the same mood, but this time with a story :

90, EATON SQUARE,

Feb. 7, 1907.

MY DEAREST COUSIN MARY,—

A desire to write to you has come over me, and I always yield to temptations. Even Providence yields to them. If I do a rash thing, I'm told I'm tempting Providence ; and if Providence can't resist *my* humble temptations, how can I be expected to resist His ? So I don't ; in I always go, head over heels. . . . I read a good story about Jenny Lind. Many years ago, in 1852, she was singing in Heidelberg. She was enthusiastically welcomed by the students, who dragged her carriage from the station to the hotel, serenaded her after the performance, and the next day (when she was to leave for Berlin) dragged her carriage from the hotel to the station and sang an enthusiastic farewell to her. As soon as the train had started, the students rushed in a body up to her bedroom, tore the sheets from the bed, cut them up into strips, and each student stuck a strip in his button-hole and wore it all day long. That afternoon a stout and very greasy old gentleman said to Douglas Jerrold (who tells the story) : "I think these Heidelberg students are all mad ! " "No," said Jerrold ; "they are fine high-spirited young fellows, a bit eccentric, but not mad." "Well," said the greasy old gentleman, "I'll tell you what they did to me. As soon as I had left my hotel this morning, a body of them rushed to my bedroom, dragged the sheets from my bed, tore them into strips, and every one is now wearing a strip in his buttonhole." The moral of this seems to be that when you go into someone else's bedroom in an hotel, *be quite sure it's the bedroom you want.* I always do. . . .

Come back soon and make me happy.

COUSIN BILL

In the last letters, in his own way—half-serious, half-jokingly—he continually refers to his death.

GRIM'S DYKE,

HARROW WEALD,

June 5, 1909.

MY VERY DEAREST COUSIN,—

Hooray ! I'm overjoyed, *we* are overjoyed to learn that we are to enjoy the inestimable pleasure of a visit from you. But don't confine it to two days—that's only a tasting order ! This will be my last year on earth, and I want it to be a jolly one, and I want you to make it jolly. Give as long as you can, for when you go it will be "Adieu" (and I'm afraid when I go it will be *Au Diable*). I'm told by a palmist that I am to die on 10th July. She is a Hebrew maid ; I call her the sweet Palmist of Israel.

Ever your affectionate

COUSIN BILL



What letters are so hard to write as letters of sympathy? But in them Gilbert was always restrained and sincere.

GRIM'S DYKE,  
HARROW WEALD,  
Dec. 2, 1909.

MY VERY DEAREST COUSIN,—

Your letter caused me great distress. I need not tell you how heartily I sympathize with you and your dear mother in the heart-wringing distress from which you must be suffering at so sad a time.

There is no condition more pathetic than that of loving relations watching at the bedside of one who is dear to them, and who is slowly and imperceptibly fading away. Words are useless in such circumstances, but it is impossible not to let such dear friends know they have one's profoundest sympathy. God bless you both. . . .

Your most devoted and affectionate

COUSIN BILL

In 1910 Gilbert went to Constantinople. Writing to Mrs. Talbot, he said: "I have been strongly advised to ally myself with the Young Turkish party, but unfortunately I was not furnished with her address."

He was home again in December, and he wrote to Mrs. Talbot a letter, of which the following is the last paragraph:

I heard a good Jew story the other day. A man was discussing Noah's Ark. He said: "I can concede a good deal. I can concede the kangaroo driven all the way from Australia. I can concede the Polar bears brought from the North Pole. I can concede a giraffe with his head and neck stuck through the ventilator. But what I cannot swallow is there being eight Jews and only two fleas among them."

. . . . .

Your most faithfully devoted

COUSIN BILL

The close of 1910 brought with it a curious anticipation that his end was very near:

GRIM'S DYKE,  
HARROW WEALD,  
Dec. 20, 1910.

MY DEAREST COUSIN MARY,—

Your long and delightful letter was a godsend to me this morning, for I was in the dumps (for no definite reason), and it cheered me up wonderfully. When I get a letter from you I feel as if I never wanted

to receive a letter from anyone else, except, of course, those containing cheques.

I received yesterday my diary for 1911, and as I looked through its blank pages it set me thinking. At my time of life (turned 74) the future becomes a serious consideration, and one can't help wondering what miseries, sorrows, calamities, deaths, and other horrors will have to be set down before it is finished—if ever it *is* finished, which seems unlikely. However, this train of thought is rather morbid and not in the least in keeping with the festive (?) season.

Ever my best beloved friend,

Your sincerely affectionate

COUSIN BILL

90, EATON SQUARE, S.W.,

*March 10, 1911.*

MY VERY DEAREST COUSIN MARY,—

Your kind letter has cheered me at a moment when I was rather "down in the mouth," down for no particular reason; but so it was. It was comforting to think that so dear a lady had me in her mind to the extent of taking the trouble to write to this broken-down and tottering fragment of superannuated mortality. . . . The old crumbling ruin has been propped up and under-pinned, and will, I think, stand for a few months yet.

Good-bye, my dearest cousin. God bless you and make you well.

Ever your most devoted and affectionate

COUSIN BILL

In the last letter to Mrs. Talbot he refers to the swimming-pond in which he was to find his death. It was written in May, 1911, and he says: "This fearfully cold weather has put a stop to all my aquatic gymnastics."

Another of Gilbert's intimate friends was Lady Crutchley, one of the most talented of amateur actresses. One of Gilbert's characteristically illustrated letters to Lady Crutchley is reproduced on the next page. The friendship began with Lady Crutchley's mother, Lady Katharine Coke, to whom Gilbert wrote in 1881:

24, THE BOLTONS,

SOUTH KENSINGTON,

*April 10, 1881.*

DEAR LADY KATHARINE,—

I am delighted to hear that you will come to our "première." My new yacht *Chloris* is to be launched on the 30th, just a week

90, EATON SQUARE,

9<sup>th</sup> Nov. 1886<sup>S.W.</sup>

My dearest



Do you think Miss Tupper  
 would play the Player Queen  
 on 23<sup>rd</sup> Nov? It's only 4  
 lines, but as we play the  
 piece three times, that makes  
 12 lines (Vide Colenso's Arithmetic)

Yours attached



after the launch of the play. Mr. and Mrs. Ionides have promised to run down to Wyvenhoe to witness the ceremony. We shall be delighted if you and the young lady whom my constitutional bashfulness scarcely permits me to call *Sybil* can manage to join them. We propose to picnic on board, after the event.

The new piece is to be called *Patience ; or, Bunthorne's Bride*. I only hope the name is not significant of a virtue which the audience will be called upon to exercise.

Please give my love to the young lady whom my unconquerable diffidence will, even now, hardly allow me to call *Sybil*, and with kind regards, in which my wife joins me, believe me to be,

Sincerely yours,

W. S. GILBERT

The following is one of the many letters written to Lady Crutchley herself :

GRIM'S DYKE,  
HARROW WEALD,  
June 20, 1902.

MY BELOVED GAL,—

Would your Par come down to us for the 7th to stop ? Your lovely Mar is coming. Then your Attractive Self could come too, and your enticing Mate. I don't know Par's address, but will you put it to him, seductive one ? Try and induce him to come.

Your devoted

W. S. GILBERT.

In 1908 Major-General Crutchley was appointed Governor of Chelsea Hospital, and Gilbert wrote his congratulations :

GRIM'S DYKE,  
HARROW WEALD,  
Nov. 25, 1908.

MY DEAR CRUTCHLEY,—

We are all overjoyed at the news of your new appointment, which, I suppose, means a substantial improvement in your good fortunes. It is very kind of you to let us know of it so soon.

I think you are quite right to resign your Governorship of Grim's Dyke Island. With every desire to say pleasant things, it would be a blatant compliment to describe your discharge of the duties attached to that appointment as a success. I believe you have never even set foot on that Dependency. I sincerely trust (and believe) that in the

more subordinate capacity of a mere Lieutenant-Governor you will be more successful. Anyway, as the poet says :

‘ It is—it is a glorious thing  
To be a Major-General ! ’

With best love to Sybil,

I am,

Always sincerely yours,

W. S. GILBERT

P.S.—If, on the strength of this promotion, Sybil should become too big for her boots, I have several second-hand pairs in good condition which might fit her.

Gilbert’s love of yachting referred to in the letter to Lady Katharine Coke occurs again in one of the letters to Miss Beatrice de Michele. Besides the *Pleione*, he owned a 110-ton yawl, called the *Chloris*, which was built for him by the well-known yacht-builder John Harvey, the father of Sir Martin Harvey.

Gilbert had a charming Lewis Carroll-like affection for girl-children. Miss Marjorie Maude, now Mrs. Burden, remembers her visits to Harrow Weald when she was a child with intense pleasure, and the letters to Miss Beatrice de Michele are good enough to cause bitter regret for the large number that have been destroyed. Such an admonition as “Don’t you marry the bathing-machine man” is the sort of thing that no one but Gilbert could possibly have written. The scores of letters to Miss Beatrice de Michele began in 1878. Few, if any, of the many letters that Gilbert wrote more fully reveal the most attractive side of his personality :

24, THE BOLTONS,  
SOUTH KENSINGTON,  
Dec. 13, 1878.

MY BELOVED B.,—

Thank you for keeping your promise. I have hungered for a letter from you, and it has come at last. I am sorry you find it dull at Ramsgate. I can’t understand it. Ramsgate in December ought to be only one remove from Paradise. But I say—Good God, how you will enjoy yourself when you come up to stop with us after Christmas. I can’t understand your not enjoying Ramsgate. Do you bathe much ? You used to be so fond of bathing—and I suppose the sands are not

so crowded as they were in August, so you will not find the usual difficulty in getting a machine. Have you enjoyed many delightful sails in the shilling excursion yacht?

I can't tell you how I envy you at such a delightful place, and at such a delightful time of year. We poor creatures, who are obliged to spend Christmas in London, are really very much to be pitied. When are you coming to pay us a good long visit? I don't mean a mere hour or two, but a visit that is something like a visit, say from Sunday evening to Monday morning. I am working hard finishing a piece, and as I eat that piece and drink that piece and exude that piece, and identify myself altogether with that piece (by which I mean that I am bothered and preoccupied by it), perhaps the letter is rather incoherent.

My duty to you all, and my devoted attachment to yourself.

Yours affectionately,

W. S. G.

P.S.—Don't call me Mr. Gilbert, and don't you marry a bathing-machine man.

DARTMOUTH,

YACHT "PLEIONE,"

May 28, '79.

MY BELOVED B.,—

Many thanks for your letter, which came as a balm to the wounded soul. We are at Dartmouth just now, having taken a cruise to Plymouth and thence back to Dartmouth. We are trying to get eastward, but the prevalence of easterly winds has delayed us muchly. We are all very jolly, and have none of us been sea-sick *yet*. God knows what may happen, for we have all three been *very near* it. I think you would enjoy it if you were here with us, and we all (and especially I) are very good-tempered. The only difficulty is in the *cuisine*—our chef has an idea that the more you water gravy, the more gravy you get. Also he thinks that shirt-sleeves and no collar is the proper *tenue* for waiting at table, but we are gradually disabusing his mind of these unfounded impressions. We have had one week of fine weather and one very d—nable, blowing, raining, and squalling like blue blazes—no bathing, and thermometer at 54° every evening. Nevertheless, we are all right and very jolly. I wish you were with us, and I hope you *will* be with us on our next cruise. We expect to be in the Thames next Friday or Saturday. We shall probably bring up at Gravesend, so look out for squalls.

Good-bye, old lady. The missus sends her best love, so do I.

Your affectionate

UNCLE BILL

THE YACHT "PLEIONE,"

April 25, '80.

B.,—

I shall arrive at Gravesend 1.44 to-morrow (Saturday) afternoon. You will be at the train to meet me. You will send your luggage up by passenger train, *then* as I shall probably have to stop at (?) Erith on my way home. You will accompany me on board the *Pleione*. You will so order yourself in all things as to tend most effectually to my bodily and mental comfort.

You will wear your best hat.

You will do your hair high on your head like a coco-nut—but not too high. You will present my compliments to Mrs. Pitman—thank her very much for her invitation, and explain that I shall have but an hour in Gravesend, or I should be most happy to lunch with her.

You will be careful to have *clean nails and knuckles*, and that no tapes are dragging below your dress. Also to wear neat boots and gloves. And in these matters fail not your friend,

W. S. GILBERT

27, PRINCE'S GARDENS, S.W.,

Feb. 17, '98.

MY DEAR DOROTHY,—

I have been on the look out for a basset-hound for you, and I think I have heard of one, but I shall know for certain on Wednesday. . . . You won't beat him (unless he deserves it) or throw him at your mother (unless she deserves it), because you are a good and kind girl and know that it is very wicked to torture dumb animals unless *they* deserve it.

With love to your mother (if she deserves it) and regards to your father (if he deserves them).

Afftly. yours (if you deserve it),

W. S. GILBERT

GRIM'S DYKE,

HARROW WEALD,

Dec. 24, '99.

MY DEAR DOROTHY,—

I am not as well as a perfectly pure and blameless character deserves to be, for I have a racking cough, which is bringing me to an early grave. I always thought I should die young. So young—so beautiful, and yet to die! Oh, what a dashed unlucky dog am I! (Shakespeare).

I'm making a lovely lake, 170 yards long and 50 yards wide, especially for you to bathe in. I said to myself: "What would Dorothy like better than anything else?" And the answer was a lake, because

her mother was one once. We are going to turn the water on at midnight on the 31st Dec., '99. . . .

Always afftly. yours,  
BILLY G.

The following letter was written to Miss de Michele's mother :

GRIM'S DYKE,  
HARROW WEALD,  
July 12, 1905.

MY DEAR BEE,—

Delighted you can come. I hope the sweet and altogether too lovely kid will give us a few days more than you are likely to be able to do, though the longer *you* can stay the better.

God bless and protect you and make you a better woman.

Always hopefully for the best,  
W. S. GILBERT

For years Gilbert was on terms of intimacy with Mr. Cyril Maude and his family. The beginning of the friendship had nothing to do with the theatre. A school-friend of Mr. Maude's was the owner of Breakspears, of which Gilbert was for many years the tenant before he went to Grim's Dyke, and it was he who introduced him to the Maudes. Afterwards Gilbert's love for Mr. and Mrs. Maude's two daughters from the time that they were little children cemented a close tie. "To my daughters," said Mr. Maude, "Gilbert was a fairy godfather, showering on them the loveliest presents and planning for them all kinds of pleasures." I loved Sir William very much, and so did all my family." This feeling is expressed in a letter written by his daughter Margery, now Mrs. Joseph Burden, of New York. Mrs. Burden writes :

"Among my early recollections are those of receiving always at Christmas-time the most sumptuous and enormous box of chocolates from the then Mr. Gilbert. For which I used to write laboured little epistles of thanks in return on much decorated notepaper. I always signed it 'Your affectionate little friend, Margery Maude.' After one of these letters I received a lovely copy of the *Bab Ballads* inscribed to 'Miss Margery Maude, from her affectionate little friend, the Author.'"

Mrs. Burden has many charming recollections of annual visits paid to Grim's Dyke. She remembers asking Gilbert,



when he had bought a new Rolls-Royce, if it were a success, and he replied: "I have just written to the makers and said 'Dear Sirs—Your car Rolls but it won't Royce.'" Mrs. Burden concludes:

'What endless laughter there always was throughout our visit—the scintillating wit to which we listened and the teasing to which we submitted, because it was all such fun. I shall never forget his wonderful sympathy and sweetness and understanding of child-minds. He gained the confidence and love of a child at once and seemed really to enjoy their companionship as much as that of their elders. The last time I was at Grim's Dyke I wanted to get a good snapshot of him, and he at once posed for me in a fantastic attitude rather like a ballet-dancer. I put the photo in my album, and he wrote under it, 'How ill grey hairs become a fool or jester.'"

Perhaps it is an even better thing to have given one grown-up child such a splendid memory than to have written *The Gondoliers* or *The Yeomen of the Guard*.

Gilbert wrote many characteristic letters to Miss Maude:

GRIM'S DYKE,  
HARROW WEALD,  
July 8, 1909.

MY DEAREST MARGERY,—

Thank you for your sweet letter. It was, as you know, a real delight to us to have you with us for a visit that was all too short. Come again, my very dear Margery, as soon as you can, and for as long as you like, and bring Pam with you, if she will come.

The Rolls-Royce is a huge success.

Always your devoted

UNCLE BILL

90, EATON SQUARE, S.W.,  
Dec. 30, 1910.

MY DEAREST MARGERY,—

I have received a very pretty portrait of a very pretty girl, but although the pretty girl is prettier than the pretty portrait, I am very glad to have the pretty portrait as a pretty souvenir of the very pretty original.

Thank you, my dear and pretty Margery, for your very pretty present.

Always affectionately yours,

W. S. GILBERT

Few of Gilbert's friendships were longer or more unclouded than that with the members of the Terry family. Mrs. Lewis (Kate Terry) has an amusing memory of their first meeting at Dr. Doran's. She was then eighteen, and in the zenith of her fame. Gilbert took her in to supper, remarking: "What will you have? Whatever you have I shall have, then I shall know exactly how you are feeling in the morning." Mrs. Lewis speaks highly of Gilbert's fidelity in misfortune, and underlines the general testimony as to his generosity. She says: "He was absolutely a good man." With Marion Terry, Gilbert had many theatrical successes. Her performance of Belinda Treherne in *Engaged* was the talk of the town. She played the part in admirable mock-tragedy vein, and her "Thank Heaven, I can still eat tarts," brought down the house nightly. Another hit was made by this charming actress in *Dan'l Druce*.

The traditional family friendship was warmly continued with Mrs. Lewis's daughter, Mabel Terry Lewis, now Mrs. Battley. She and Gilbert had a common bond in their love of animals, amusingly apparent in the letters. For her talent as an actress he had a sincere admiration. The long friendship with the Terry family had, of course, a memorable sequence when Julia Neilson married Fred Terry.

Gilbert's letters to Miss Mabel Terry Lewis were written with the usual note of affectionate fun. The first quoted here was sent after the announcement of her engagement to be married.

GRIM'S DYKE,  
HARROW WEALD,  
April 16, 1903.

MY DEAR MABEL,—

I am delighted to hear of your two engagements.

I hope you will play leading business in both of them. Indeed, I'm sure you will. Joking apart, I am very happy to know you are so happy.

Love to your mother and sister.

Always affectionately yours,  
W. S. GILBERT

GRIM'S DYKE,  
HARROW WEALD,  
August 3, 1903.

MY DEAR MABEL,—

You are a delightful girl, and I thank you heartily both for the kitten and the trouble you have taken to ensure a pleasant journey for her. She arrived quite safely—is in roaring (or rather mewing) health, and is adored by everybody. She shares my humble bed (which sounds equivocal without the context), and is so supremely charming that she reminds me of nothing so much as her dear donor. . . .

With best love to you and to all.

Yours afftly.,  
W. S. GILBERT

GRIM'S DYKE,  
HARROW WEALD,  
Dec. 11, 1903.

MY DEAR MABEL,—

I haven't an evening between this and the 19th that I can count upon, so although I hate matinees, I'm coming to see *Mrs. Gorringe* on Saturday afternoon next. I hope you'll be a good girl and play very nicely.

Always afftly. yours,  
W. S. GILBERT

We are able to print one letter to Miss Marion Terry, Miss Mabel Terry Lewis's aunt :

BREAKSPEARS, UXBRIDGE  
June 27, 1889.

MY DEAR MARION,—

If you are the Miss Terry whom I knew very well some years ago, I shall, of course, be very pleased that you should play *Engaged* for your brother's benefit. But not having heard of or from that young lady for about 3½ years, I concluded that Abraham had taken her to his bosom.

Yours affectionately.  
(if it is the same girl),  
W. S. GILBERT

Lady Bancroft, with whom Gilbert had been professionally associated years before, had rather a severe accident in 1893, and Gilbert wrote her a letter which Sir Squire Bancroft says in his reminiscences "caused my wife infinite pleasure, the

writer of it not being prone readily to show his feelings." It ran :

89, PROMENADE, HOMBURG,  
July 29, 1893.

MY DEAR MRS. BANCROFT,—

I can't help writing to tell you how delighted we are to hear you are making such good progress towards recovery, and that you are likely to be able to get out of town next week. Apart from any feeling of personal regard, it would have been a public calamity if your accident had permanently disabled you. I have a horror of "gush"—and the Englishman's desire to keep his emotions to himself is always strong within me—but there are occasions when this desire yields both to extreme pleasure and to extreme sorrow; and when such an invaluable artist as yourself has had so narrow an escape from a dreadful catastrophe, it is impossible not to relieve one's feelings by writing to express one's gratitude, even at the risk of being tiresome. Please show me that you forgive me for worrying you with this letter by not replying to it. I shall then know that I have given you little or no trouble. I shall learn how you are.

My wife sends her best regards and joins with me in my pleasure at the good news.

Believe me to be always sincerely yours,  
W. S. GILBERT

The last letters that we include in this chapter were written to Miss Gordon Scott, an intimate family friend who had no connection with the theatre.

GRIM'S DYKE,  
HARROW WEALD,  
July 30, 1903.

MY DEAR AUNT ANNIE,—

I was much touched by your kindness in writing to Nancy to inquire after my health, and I take upon myself to reply to your kind inquiries, although I am debarred from going into physiological details as fully as she might have done. I caught a nasty chill at the Waterlows' from sitting on a damp lawn with distinctly the loveliest copper-haired lady I have ever met—at least it was that, or eating the greater part of a large melon on Sunday night. These two causes tend to the same effect, so I can't say positively which of them is responsible for the fact that I haven't left the house since Sunday, and have been living entirely on milk and rusks ever since.

However, I am better to-day. If Nancy had been writing, she would have explained *exactly how much better*. I hope I shall be all right

to-morrow. I am very sorry to hear that you have caught cold—probably on the same occasion, and from sitting on damp lawns with a silver-haired youth of godlike aspect.

Always, my dear Aunt Annie,

Affectionately yours,

ALPHONSE

GRIM'S DYKE,

HARROW WEALD,

Sept. 29, 1903.

MY EXTREMELY DEAR AUNT ANNIE,—

Your beautiful neck-tie has come to hand, and I am now wearing it. Every one tells me I look *sweet*. I hardly thought you meant it when you said you would finish it for me, so it came almost as a surprise. I hope that some day David will see me wearing it. Wouldn't he play Uriah the Hittite on me if he had a chance!

With many thanks for your lovely present, which I shall wear until it is rags (and then keep it next my heart).

Always affectionately yours,

W. S. GILBERT

Nov. 18, 1908.

MY VERY DEARLY BELOVED HIGHLAND LASSIE,—

Many thanks for your good wishes. I heartily reciprocate them, and hope I shall live long and be always very happy, and not too good.

Affectionately yours,

W. S. GILBERT

How different is the Gilbert of these letters—affectionate, sympathetic, giving friendship with both hands—from the grim Gilbert of tradition, the Gilbert who never existed.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE CROWNING YEARS

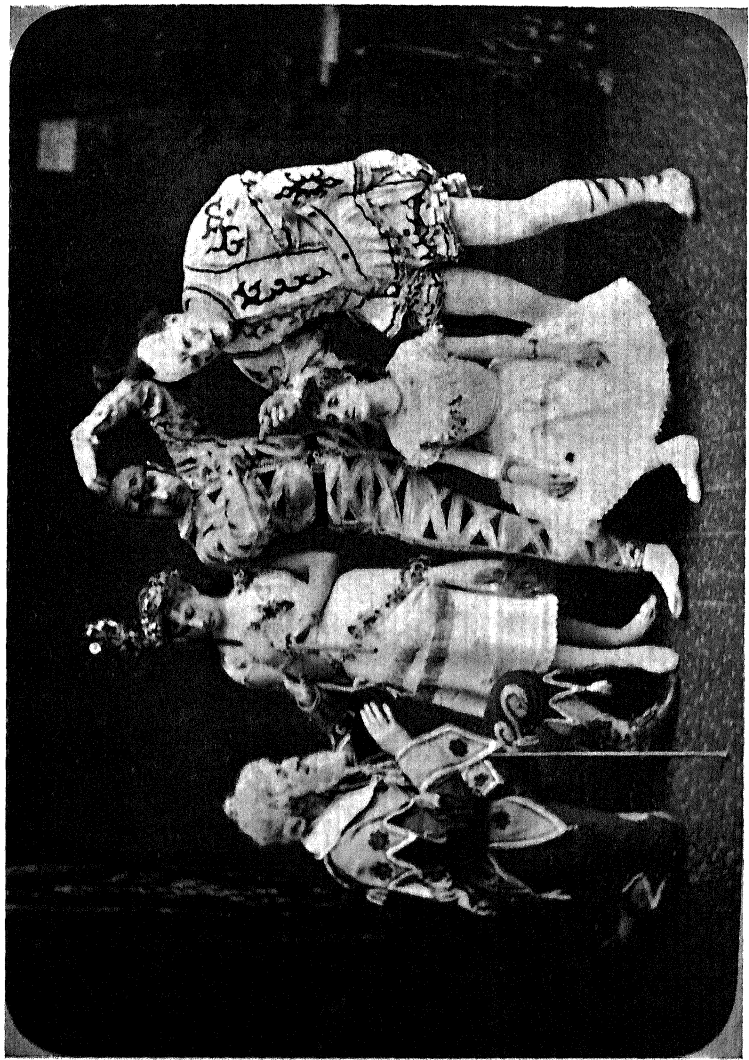
IT is one of the ironies of the story of Gilbert and Sullivan that, great as was the immediate popularity of the operas, it was not until Sullivan's death that there was a general and conscious appreciation of the greatness of the gift that the two men had given to the English stage. Whole-hearted appreciation dates from 1906, when several of the operas were revived by Mrs. D'Oyly Carte. In December of this year the O.P. Club gave Gilbert a congratulatory dinner at the Hotel Cecil. He wrote afterwards to Mrs. Talbot :

"Four hundred and fifty sat down, and I was made much of; any amount of melted butter was (figuratively) poured down my back. The evening concluded with a number of selections from the Savoy operas, sung by the old Savoyards, who were present in great numbers. It's well I don't believe all the good things that were said about me, or I should be suffering from a swelled head and be too big for my boots. As it is, both head and feet are normal."

In response to the toast of his health, Gilbert said: "The magnificent compliment that the O.P. Club has paid me, and the delicate and graceful fancy that prompted them to invite all my dear old comrades of the Savoy companies of long ago, has sunk into my soul. No composer and no author was ever blessed with a more zealous or more effective body of coadjutors; and during the twenty years that I had the absolute control of the stage-management of the Savoy operas, I never had a seriously angry word with any member of the company, principal or chorus. Death has sadly thinned their ranks—Alfred Cellier, their esteemed conductor; Miss Everard, the

original Little Buttercup; George Bentham, the original Alexis in *The Sorcerer*; Alice Barnett, the stately Lady Jane of *Patience*, and the Fairy Queen in *Iolanthe*; poor little Emmie Owen; D'Oyly Carte, our enterprising manager; our three stage managers, Richard Barker, Charles Harris, and William Seymour; and lastly, my old friend and invaluable co-worker, Arthur Sullivan, whose untimely death, in the fullness of his powers, extinguished the class of opera with which his name was so honourably identified—a composer of the rarest genius, and who, because he was a composer of the rarest genius, was as modest and as unassuming as a neophyte should be but seldom is.

“It is a source of sincere gratification to me to reflect that the rift that parted us for a time was completely bridged over, and that, at the time of Sir Arthur Sullivan’s lamented death, the most cordial relations existed between us. When Sullivan and I began to collaborate, English comic opera had practically ceased to exist. Such musical entertainments as held the stage were adaptations of the plots of the operas of Offenbach, Audran, and Lecoq. The plots had generally been ‘bowdlerized’ out of intelligibility, and when they had not been subjected to this treatment they were frankly improper, whereas the ladies’ dresses suggested that the management had gone on the principle of doing a little and doing it well. Sullivan and I set out with the determination to prove that these elements were not essential to the success of humorous opera. We resolved that our plots, however ridiculous, should be coherent, that our dialogue should be void of offence; that, on artistic principles, no man should play a woman’s part and no woman a man’s. Finally, we agreed that no lady of the company should be required to wear a dress that she could not wear with absolute propriety at a private fancy ball. I believe I may say that we proved our case. We are credited—or discredited—with one conspicuous failure, *Ruddigore*; or, *The Witch’s Curse*. Well, it ran eight months, and, with the sale of the libretto, put £7,000 into my pocket. It



GILBERT AS HARLEQUIN





is not generally known that, bending before the storm of Press execration aroused by its awful title, we were within an ace of changing it from *Ruddigore*; or, *The Witch's Curse*, to *Kensington Gore*; or, *Robin and Richard were Two Pretty Men*.

"While I am dealing with Savoy opera, I am anxious to avow my indebtedness to the author of the *Bab Ballads*, from which I have so unblushingly cribbed. I can only hope that, like Shakespeare, I may be held to have so far improved upon the original stories as to have justified the thefts that I committed.

"Finally, I may say that it is a source of infinite pleasure to me to see so many old Savoyards present, and it is still more delightful to know that so many of them have prospered and are now, in the plenitude of their powers, earning salaries varying from that of an Under-Secretary of State to that of a Prime Minister. And when the operas revert, as they will, to their original proprietors, they (or their executors) will hold out their hands to George Grossmith, to Rutland Barrington, to Walter Passmore, to Robert Evett, to Henry Lytton, to Courtice Pounds, to Charles Kenningham, to Durward Lely, to Frank Wyatt, to John le Hay, to William Denny, to Richard Temple, to Ruth Vincent, to Geraldine Ulmar, to Isabel Jay, to Nancy McIntosh, to Louie Pounds, to Agnes Fraser, to Decima Moore, and to Rosina Brandram—Rosina of the glorious voice that rolled out as full-bodied Burgundy rolled down; Rosina, whose dismal doom it was to represent undesirable old ladies of sixty-five, but who, with all the resources of the perruquier and the make-up box, could never succeed in looking more than an attractive eight-and-twenty (it was her only failure); to all of these they will hold out their hands and implore them to return to the arena in which they achieved so many triumphs."

In January, 1907, Gilbert wrote to Mrs. Talbot :

"Now I've a little bit of news for you. It is a *profound secret*, and I haven't told it to anybody. My news is that——has commissioned Lord Knollys to find out whether I would accept a knighthood, and

as I expressed my willingness to do so, it will, I suppose, be conferred next May, when the birthday honours are announced. It is a tin-pot, twopenny-halfpenny sort of distinction, but as no dramatic author as such ever had it for dramatic authorship alone, I felt I ought not to refuse it. I suppose it is to be given to me as a sort of impalpable old-age pension in consideration of my being a broken-down old ruin. Possibly the King may forget all about it (which wouldn't cause me a moment's annoyance), but those who know about these things say it is sure to be."

Sir John Vanbrugh, the Restoration dramatist, had, of course, been knighted generations before, but this honour came to him on account of the hideous architecture that survives in Blenheim Palace, and not for his licentious plays. Gilbert was knighted on June 30, 1907. The following is one of the first letters he wrote as Sir William :

"I went yesterday to the Investiture at Buckingham Palace, and was duly tapped on both shoulders by Edward VII, and then kissed hands. I found myself politely described in the official list as Mr. William Gilbert, *playwright*, suggesting that my work was analogical to that of a wheelwright, or a millwright, or a wainwright, or a shipwright, as regards the mechanical character of the process by which our respective results are achieved. There is an excellent word 'dramatist' which seems to fit the situation, but it is not applied until we are dead, and then we become dramatists as oxen, sheep, and pigs are transfigured into beef, mutton, and pork after their demise. You never hear of a novel-wright or a picture-wright, or a poem-wright; and why a playwright? When *The Gondoliers* was commanded at Windsor by her late Majesty, the piece was described as 'by Sir Arthur Sullivan,' the librettist being too insignificant an insect to be worth mentioning on a programme which contained the name of the wig-maker in bold type! And I had to pay £87 10s. as my share of sending the piece down to Windsor, besides forfeiting my share of the night's profits at the Savoy!"

In a leading article on the birthday honour, *The Times* said :

"It is almost needless to say anything about Mr. William S. Gilbert, whose works have become classical and the object of such fervent affection as classics seldom enjoy. Is the knighthood compensation for the temporary ban which was placed on *The Mikado*, or a reward for the sublime mockery of the Peers in *Iolanthe* ?

The value of the title in Gilbert's eyes was solely that it

was a recognition of the dramatist's craft. This point of view is expressed in the letters he wrote in answer to the many congratulations he received. He said to Mr. Arthur Coke :

GRIM'S DYKE,  
HARROW WEALD,  
July 3, 1907.

MY DEAR COKE,—

It gave me infinite pleasure to receive your very kind and cordial letter of congratulation. The knighthood, *per se*, is, of course, a mere triviality, and, from any but a professional point of view, an unmeaning scrap of tinsel ; but it has a somewhat special significance in my eyes, as I am the only dramatic author upon whom, *qua* dramatic author, it has ever been conferred—for Burnand received it for service to the Liberal Unionist Party as Editor of *Punch*. My first impulse was to decline it, but on reconsideration I determined to accept it, for the reason I have stated.

With best regards,  
Very sincerely yours,  
W. S. GILBERT

Writing to Mr. Herbert Sullivan, Sir Arthur Sullivan's nephew, Gilbert said :

GRIM'S DYKE,  
HARROW WEALD,  
July 29, 1907.

MY DEAR SULLIVAN,—

Thank you heartily for your kind congratulations. The goodwill expressed by old and valued friends like yourself is the pleasantest part of the business, to my thinking.

Very truly yours,  
W. S. GILBERT

Few things in Gilbert's life appear to have given him greater satisfaction than the invitation he received from the Committee of the Garrick Club to become one of its members. The unqualified recognition of the distinguished position won by his art caused Gilbert readily to forget and forgive an unpleasant incident that had happened years before. Gilbert himself told the story in one of his letters :

" I've just been elected to the Garrick Club, for which I was black-balled thirty-seven years ago—through a case of mistaken identity,

for I was quite unknown then, and the Committee thought they were pilling another man. When they discovered their mistake, they asked me to put myself up again, but it occurred to me that, as the mistake was theirs, it was theirs to rectify it. Moreover, I am not one of those who turn the second cheek to the smiter. So matters have remained until the other day, when the Committee did me the honour of selecting me for immediate election 'on account of my public distinction' (!). As Heaven had signified its displeasure at the action of the Committee of thirty-seven years ago by sweeping them off the face of the earth, and as I had no quarrel with the present Committee, who are all my very good friends, I accepted the honour they had proposed to confer on me. And so 'the stone that the builders rejected,' etc."

The knighthood and the membership of the Garrick Club were followed by two other complimentary dinners, which, it is pleasant to record, were largely organized by Mr. Sullivan. Gilbert's pleasure is expressed in two letters:

GRIM'S DYKE,  
HARROW WEALD,  
*Dec. 24, 1907.*

MY DEAR SULLIVAN,—

Thank you for the oysters you have so kindly sent us. We are all prepared to die in excruciating agonies on the altar of friendship.

I believe I am indebted to you, as well as to Marshall and Willie Mathews, for having inaugurated and fostered the idea of the dinner of 2nd Feb. It is the most gratifying compliment that I have ever received, and I thank you heartily for it.

Always truly yours,  
W. S. GILBERT

GRIM'S DYKE,  
HARROW WEALD,  
*Oct. 4, 1908.*

MY DEAR SULLIVAN,—

There is little need to tell you how deeply I appreciate the good-feeling that actuated you in organizing yesterday's most successful dinner. It is an instance of friendship that can never fade from my memory. I know that you will believe that these are no mere words of course, but that they are the inadequate expression of a sincere and lasting gratitude.

Always sincerely yours,  
W. S. GILBERT

Referring to the enthusiasm with which his speech had been received at one of these banquets, he said to a corre-

spondent: "Even your stony heart would have been softened, and you would have said to yourself, 'There must be something in the old booby after all.'"

In many respects Gilbert was a lucky man. He was as lucky in meeting Sullivan as Sullivan was in meeting him; he was lucky in the long-sighted managerial policy that gave him absolute control of the Savoy stage. He was lucky in the smaller things; he once confessed that he had drawn the winner seven times and the second horse twice in the sweepstakes held at his club—a record that must be hard to beat. But it was not luck, but genius added to nearly fifty years of hard work, that gave Gilbert his great position.

He said in a speech at a Harrow Speech Day:

"In proposing the toast, Sir Samuel Hoare has been so good as to speak in very complimentary terms of the knighthood which His Majesty has been pleased to confer upon me, conferred, I am afraid, owing to the fact that I am the oldest dramatic author now before the public. I am not an agricultural labourer, but I have this in common with a certain type of worthy ploughman, who in the bygone days was awarded by the Squire with a pair of corduroy breeches, and a crown piece in each pocket, in consideration of his having brought up a family of fifteen children without extraneous assistance. I have been rewarded for having brought up a family of 63 plays without ever having had to apply to the relieving officer for parochial assistance. This knighthood I take to be a sort of commuted old-age pension, and may perhaps be taken as a sample of the manner in which the present Government will deal with that complicated problem when it comes to tackle it two years hence."

Fame was his at the end of his days. An even greater fame is his to-day.

## CHAPTER X

### GILBERT AS A LAWYER

WHEN Gilbert wrote :

“ The law’s the true embodiment  
Of everything that’s excellent,”

he was writing something that he certainly believed. The law refused him a livelihood, but it remained his first love, and “ when he went to the Bar as a very young man ” he took a step destined to be fraught with definite and delightful consequences for the world.

He turned every incident of his brief career as an almost briefless barrister to brilliant account, and transmuted dry dust to something all glitter and sparkle. It is interesting to remember that when Gilbert attended the old North London Sessions House at Clerkenwell, only lately disused, Dickens was still fulminating against legal abuses. The immortal Chancery suit of “ Jarndyce *v.* Jarndyce ” had only recently come to its tragic end. Mr. Stryver, K.C., and Sydney Carton, had not long finished the case which saved the life of Charles Darnay, Marquis d’Evremond. Gilbert was a younger contemporary of Eugene Wrayburn, the barrister concerned in the murder mystery in *Our Mutual Friend*.

It is sometimes suggested that Gilbert over-caricatured the legal profession, but it must be remembered that he practised in a less refined age, and, if the truth be told, Buzfuz is, even now, frequently briefed at the sessions.

Dickens’s lawyers are often villains ; Gilbert’s are generally wags. Many of the *Bab Ballads* have legal subjects, and all

through his life Gilbert had legal friends. One of the most intimate of them was that king of court jesters, Sir Frank Lockwood, with whom Gilbert had many battles of wit. The first success of the great collaboration between Gilbert and Sir Arthur Sullivan was purely legal—*Trial by Jury*. It captured a public faithful to it ever since, and it is amusing to find the only dissentient voice that of a deceased judge. In a letter written in 1906, Gilbert said: "I met Kekewich the other day. He says he likes all my plays except *Trial by Jury*. He seemed to think that in holding the proceedings up to ridicule I was trenching on his prerogative." Mr. Justice Kekewich, it may be remembered, was famous for having his judgments upset by the Court of Appeal.

In Gilbert's later days, *Trial by Jury* was often performed at benefit entertainments, and Gilbert delighted in appearing himself in the cast in wig and gown. In this connection he wrote:

GRIM'S DYKE,  
HARROW WEALD,  
May 26, 1906.

DEAR ROWLAND-BROWN,—

I believe you are off to the midnight sun soon. So I write to ask you if you will be so kind as to lend me your wig and gown for *Trial by Jury* (Ellen Terry benefit on, I think, 10th June or thereabouts). If you like to send your kit here, I will take care of it while you are away, and promise it shan't be used for charades or other profane entertainments.

Yours truly,  
W. S. GILBERT

Again, on June 6, he writes: "There is to be a dress rehearsal of *Trial by Jury* at 2.30, so that photographs may be taken to sell at the performance. Will you lend me your robes." That these, having descended from father to son, were decidedly shabby, he never seemed to care. "Will you sink your dignity as a barrister and call upon my solicitor in Lincoln's Inn Fields to execute the appointment of new trustees to my marriage settlement?" reveals him, as always, punctilious regarding legal etiquette.



An anthology might be made of Gilbert's legal ditties alone. In *The Pirates of Penzance* law is most prominent with the police. In *Patience* it is the solicitor on whom devolves the duty of raffling the poet Bunthorne among "twenty love-sick maidens." It has become a tradition, by the way, for the solicitor to be "made up" in the likeness of the late Sir George Lewis. *Iolanthe* with its immortal Lord Chancellor is, like *Trial by Jury*, an intrinsically legal opera. *The Sorcerer* has a notary among the characters, and *Ruddigore* teems with quiet fun of legal origin. In *Utopia Limited* the Princess Zara sings the praises of Sir Bailey-Barre, Q.C., M.P., and incidentally summarizes the qualities of the perfect lawyer:

"A complicated gentleman allow me to present,  
Of all the arts and sciences the terse embodiment.  
He's a great arithmetician who can demonstrate with ease  
That two and two are three or five or anything you please;  
An eminent logician who can make it clear to you  
That black is white when looked at from the proper point of view;  
A marvellous philologist who'll undertake to show  
That 'yes' is but another and a neater form of 'no.'"

In an old number of *Fun*, Gilbert published a poem called "The Middlesex Sessions," where he had himself practised, and for which he does not seem to have retained unqualified admiration:

"Oh, foreigners, wishing to carry away  
Of our legal procedure impressions,  
Don't take any curious specimens, pray,  
From the scenes of the Middlesex Sessions.  
The blustering Middlesex Sessions—  
Disorderly Middlesex Sessions—  
For exceptional quite,  
In our courts, is the sight  
You will see at the Middlesex Sessions.

"There judge, bar, and jury, as matter of course,  
Set *etiquette* all at defiance;  
For each in its infallibility's force  
Reposes the firmest reliance.

It does, at the Middlesex Sessions—  
Disorderly Middlesex Sessions—  
To the others one pin,  
Will neither give in,  
In the cases at Middlesex Sessions."

Gilbert made fun of law, but he also took it very seriously, and he was decidedly litigious. He brought many actions in his life, and was dissuaded with difficulty from bringing many more. The most famous litigation in which he was concerned was the action for libel which he brought in 1898 against the *Era*. Miss Fortescue had produced his *Fortune Hunter* at the Theatre Royal, Birmingham, and had afterwards taken it to Edinburgh. Here Gilbert, who had travelled north to see the performance, was interviewed by a local newspaper and wrongly reported in a reference to the late Mr. Sydney Grundy. The *Era* made some caustic comments on the interview, and the result was the libel action, in which Gilbert was represented by Mr. Lawson Walton, Mr. Marshall Hall, and Mr. Rowland-Brown. Mr. Carson, as he then was, appeared for the defendants. Sir Henry Irving, Sir George Alexander, Sir Herbert Tree, and many other famous players, were called as witnesses in the case. The action was perhaps unwisely brought, and in the end the jury disagreed. The cross-examination of Gilbert by Mr. Carson was amusing. He admitted that he had said that English actors spoke blank verse exactly like Eton and Harrow boys on Speech Day, and that Irving, Tree, and Alexander suffered from a dull monotony of delivery. When asked if he thought that this was a fair criticism, he replied that he knew it to be absolutely true. He made many caustic references to the prevailing fashion in musical comedy. "I call it bad and the managers call it musical comedy." He admitted he had once translated a French play in one night, and had made £3,000 out of it. "That was better than the Bar," commented Mr. Carson. "It was better than my experience of it," was Gilbert's reply.

In 1895, Gilbert brought an action based on the suggestion

that an American lady journalist had misrepresented him. He wrote to Mrs. Carte:

27, PRINCES GARDENS, S.W.,  
Nov. 18, '98.

DEAR MRS. CARTE,—

I know how terribly busy you are, but if you will spare me an hour on Monday or Tuesday (when the trial will probably come on) to say that you have known me personally in business for 16 or 18 years—that during the last ten years or so you have been intimately connected with the management of the Savoy Theatre—that during that time you have had many opportunities of forming an opinion as to my characteristics, and that you have seen nothing in me to suggest that I am a man in whom vanity and egotism have degenerated into a disease—that I do not desire (as far as you know) to dominate the universe—and that I am not in the habit of abusing and insulting the actors who play in the pieces, I shall be greatly indebted to you.

I will take care that you are sent for at the very latest moment, and that your evidence shall be taken as soon as possible after you arrive.

Yours very truly,  
W. S. GILBERT

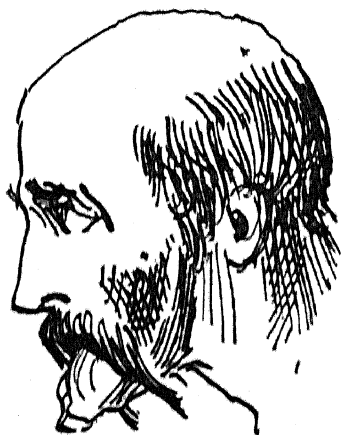
The jury disagreed in this action too, and Gilbert wrote:

"As you will have seen, the jury disagreed—10 were for me and 2 against. The Judge summed up like a drunken monkey—he is in the last stage of senile decay and knew absolutely nothing about the case. It was impossible to convince him that I was not bringing the action against the interviewer! It is a frightful scandal that such men should be allowed to sit in judgment."

In another reference to the case he said:

"The action was a 'walk-over.' But this claim set up by the American interviewer to interview any European he or she may select—and burning that European in effigy if he refuses—is an extension of the Monroe doctrine in a direction never contemplated (I feel sure) by its originator."

After he had been appointed J.P. for Middlesex, a large part of Gilbert's leisure was spent sitting as a magistrate at Edgware petty sessions. He rarely failed to attend, and never was there a more careful or a more interested magistrate. It was his habit to make full notes of the evidence. Like Sir Frank Lockwood, he used to ornament these notes with clever pen-



and-ink drawings, many of which have been preserved. For the unfortunate he had sympathy and kindly understanding, as is shown by the following letter written in 1909 to the Clerk of the Court :

GRIM'S DYKE,  
HARROW WEALD,  
May 28, 1909.

DEAR MR. TOOTELL,—

I can't bear to think of that poor devil going to prison for a month on *nulla bona*, so I enclose a cheque for the amount owing by him.

Yours,  
W. S. GILBERT

For offences against the person Gilbert had no sort of mercy. He pursued the offender with a sort of bitter zest. He would not allow that there could be any sort of defence, and he used his legal experience and knowledge to the uttermost limit, often, as his colleagues on the Bench testify, with beneficial results. Old offenders learnt to dread Gilbert's lash, and cowards trembled when they were brought before him.

Mr. A. K. Carlyon, who for twenty-two years sat on the Bench at Edgware with Gilbert, says that he acquired a high opinion of the dramatist's legal ability and admired the strict sense of justice which characterized his decisions. Mr. Carlyon says that cruelty to children or animals made Gilbert very wrath, and his sentences for such offences were as severe as the law permitted.

The humorist sometimes appeared on the Bench. One morning an old man and woman appeared before him to obtain a separation order. In view of their age, the magistrates tried pacification. "Well, but," said the old woman, "he's a nasty old man, he beats me, and he's got an abscess in his back." "Not a case of abscess makes the heart grow fonder," murmured Gilbert to his colleagues.

## CHAPTER XI

### GILBERT AT HOME

IN 1890 Gilbert bought Grim's Dyke, a beautiful house in Harrow Weald, built by Norman Shaw for Frederick Goodall, the Victorian painter. This remained Gilbert's home until his death. Even thirty years ago, Harrow Weald was almost a suburb, but despite tubes and speculative builders, Grim's Dyke remains a real country house, its beautiful garden affording a clear view northwards to the Chilterns. Grim's Dyke was excellently described by the late Bram Stoker in an article in the *World's Magazine*:

"The house is large and has many large and handsome rooms, all of which are stored with objects of interest and beauty. The great drawing-room, formerly the painter's studio, which has the dimensions and windows of a chapel, is the storehouse of works of art. The fireplace, a massive carving in Cornish alabaster some fifteen feet high, was designed by Sir William himself. . . .

"Scattered through the rooms are some lovely cabinets, one of great beauty. Italian of the XIVth century, another Japanese three hundred years old wrought in lacquer, tortoiseshell, cedar, ivory, and agate. On one table is a great ivory goblet German XVIth century—on another table is an exquisite sculpture of a cat and kittens (Freminet, 1863).

"Elsewhere in the house, scattered among works of art and curios of all kinds, are interesting souvenirs of the dramatist's own plays. For instance, in the billiard-room is the block and axe so long used in *The Yeomen of the Guard*. Here too are 250 drawings from the *Bab Ballads* framed. In the hall—wherein is a fine suit of steel armour—is a huge model of a full-rigged ship. It rests on a sea of green glass, and is fourteen feet long. It is a facsimile of one of the old three-deckers of a hundred and ten guns sent to the Black Sea at the Crimean War—the *Queen*, in which Sir Evelyn Wood was a midshipman."

This ship was the model for *Pinafore*, of which Lord Jellicoe said, "Not a rope is wrong."

Gilbert loved Grim's Dyke. It was his home. It was his custom to take a London house for a few months in the winter, but he was always glad to return to Harrow Weald in the spring, even preferring, in the days before he bought a motor-car and was busy with new productions, the tedium of midnight trains to staying in London. He once told Rowland-Brown that he hoped when he died he would be buried in his own garden.

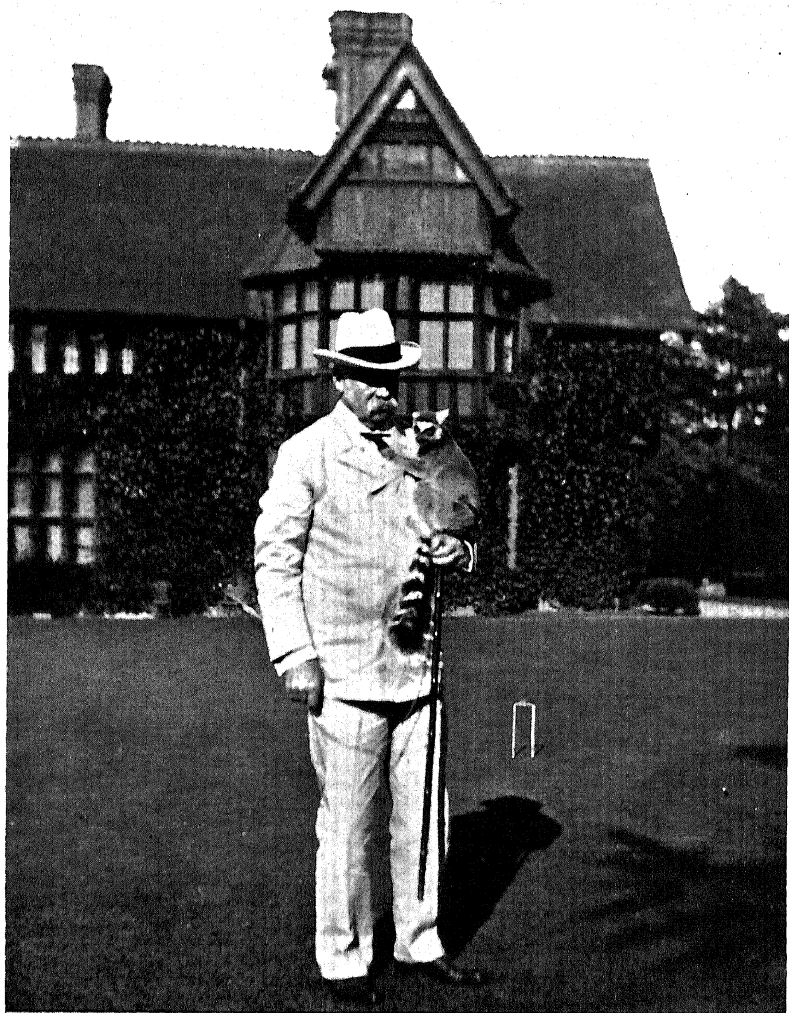
When Gilbert first arrived at Harrow Weald, he was just "the man who writes words for Sullivan," and wealthy suburbia could hardly understand how a mere writer could contrive to buy such an estate. Gilbert was far too fine a gentleman for any arrogant display of wealth, but it was unquestionably a matter of great satisfaction to him to prove that fortune could be won by literary art as well as by business astuteness. Few men ever possessed more of the pride of his craft.

Though Gilbert lavished money on the embellishment of the house he loved, his own personal tastes were Spartan. His bedroom was barely furnished with a narrow iron bedstead and a very simple bookshelf. Gilbert lived very happily at Harrow Weald, gaining the complete goodwill of his neighbours.

He was an admirable host. He once said he liked to sit at "a fully decorated table," and the flowers at Grim's Dyke were always exquisite and artistically arranged. Gilbert had a sentimental preference for mignonette, but he loved all flowers, though he once complained of a variety of cineraria that "Nature is sometimes too aniline." He had the Dickensian habit of wearing a red flower in his buttonhole.

The men always came from the dining-room very quickly at Grim's Dyke, Gilbert preferring to talk to women than to men, though certain men, particularly lawyers, like Sir Frank Lockwood, inspired him to brilliancy of repartee.

Fancy-dress dinners were sometimes given at Grim's Dyke,



GILBERT AT GRIM'S DYKE





and Gilbert delighted in making up as a stately Arab chief. He liked dancing, and balls were often given at his house, when he would reproduce something of his youthful skill in performing the Scotch reel.

Children were favoured guests at Grim's Dyke. "The little girl wants me to show her the chickens," he said on one occasion to a roomful of visitors, and went off with an air of pleased obedience.

The Gilbertian children's parties in Harrington Gardens were as superior in all ways to all others, as those of Dickens as described by Lady Ritchie were to those of his time. Gilbert led the revels with the obvious personal delight that Dickens himself felt, and thus diffused delight among the small guests. There were generally a few children sprinkled about the lawns at the Grim's Dyke garden parties, where the numerous pets made them very happy. They received an amount of attention from the host that grown-ups often envied.

When he chose, Gilbert was a master of small talk. His knack of painting a portrait in a word was peculiarly his own, and sometimes pretty, as when he said of that *rara avis*, a real old lady, all lace and brocade and sloping shoulders: "She belongs to the early keepsake period." There was uncomplimentary discussion of a matron of too ample proportions, when Gilbert put in, tolerantly: "After all, she's quite nice, only I prefer a woman to be as long as she is broad." He invariably had a lady on each side at dinner at his own house. Once, when surrounded by quite a bevy, he was asked why he was inconstant, and he answered: "Because I am too good to be true."

Looking on at a dance, with an expression of modified boredom, he was ironically questioned whether he was enjoying himself. "Not at all," was the rejoinder. "For every boy with an eyebrow on the upper lip takes the *pas* of me here." The same evening he announced that his horses were Bryant and May—the perfect match. When a fussy female exclaimed, "Sir William, Sir William, there's a wasp on your sleeve—

you will be stung," he looked up unmoved. "I have no great opinion of the intellect of the insect, but it is not such a fool as to take me for a flower."

He rarely talked about his work, and was the only person who never quoted it; but occasionally, with his intimates, he accepted a challenge for a lightning rhyme. One well worth remembering should atone to the village it immortalizes for having inspired the worst ever made by Lear:

"There was a young lady of Pinner,  
Who was a society sinner.  
She went off, they say,  
To Paris one day—  
And the rest—shall be told after dinner."

It was naturally in talking of matters connected with the stage that Gilbert was at his happiest. He described a dancer whose scanty attire was causing scandalous tongues to wag as "contriving to support a bare existence." His scathing "funny without being vulgar" regarding a certain "Hamlet" has become hackneyed. "Poor Asterisk, he has all the faults of an actor without the excuse of being one," is easily forgiven by those exasperated by the colossal conceit of the victim. Another player, suffering visibly from a too perfect make-up as Falstaff on a hot night, inquired of Gilbert what he thought of his performance, with the result of a note of admiration: "My dear fellow, I think your pores act marvellously!"

Gilbert had a genuine affection for the amateur actor. He was himself fond of acting, and in 1902 he appeared in his own *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern*, of which four performances were given in aid of the Bushey Cottage Hospital. The cast included Miss Nancy McIntosh, Lady Crutchley, and the late Captain Robert Marshall. Gilbert was splendidly made up as the King, and wore his royal robes as to the manner born, looking much more like a Shakespearean than a burlesque figure. He played the same part afterwards in Lincoln's Inn Gardens in aid of the King's College Hospital. An amateur

performance of his *Sweethearts*, arranged by Gilbert at Stanmore in 1904, was followed by a delicious criticism in a local paper, which said : " The chief attraction of the afternoon was the performance of what is described as an ' original dramatic contrast entitled *Sweethearts*.' This comedy, which was first given in 1874, has lost nothing by keeping, and the little sketch was delightfully given. It is to be regretted that the comedies of Mr. Gilbert have undeservedly lost popularity in favour of the witty jingle wedded to the imperishable music of Sir Arthur Sullivan."

The following is the programme of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern* in 1902 :

" ROSENCRANTZ AND GUILDENSTERN."

A Tragic Episode in Three Tableaux,  
Founded on an old Danish Legend.

By

W. S. Gilbert.

CAST :

KING CLAUDIUS (of Denmark)	Mr. W. S. Gilbert
QUEEN GERTRUDE	Miss Nancy McIntosh
HAMLET (Queen Gertrude's son, betrothed to Ophelia)	Captain R. Marshall
ROSENCRANTZ (a Courtier, in love with Ophelia)	Mr. Harry Hughes
GUILDENSTERN (a Courtier, not in love with Ophelia)	Mr. H. Rowland-Brown
FIRST PLAYER	Mr. G. Skilbeck
SECOND PLAYER	Miss Mabel Turner
OPHELIA	Mrs. Charles Crutchley

Mrs. Kendal has told the story of an early and unexpected appearance of Gilbert on the stage. Acting was one of the many things he did well. How many times he rehearsed his own plays and operas with amateurs it would be hard to tell. How much wholly unexpected patience he showed it is difficult to assess. Perhaps his affection for amateurs was partly due to their occasional support of his darling theory that

acting, being mimetic, was as much a matter of instruction as elementary mathematics. There was nothing deeper-rooted in Gilbert's creed than the certainty that actors are made, not born. It was one of his obsessions. It was amusing to note that if he was in the audience at the worst of amateur "entertainments," he attended with just the close attention he invariably manifested in the theatre. When he acted himself, he was always delighted, as the player should be, when he had pleased his audience.

The shelves of the library at Grim's Dyke are lined by complete editions of all the best-known authors, but Gilbert was no bibliophil in the technical sense, and he possessed no first editions. He was a reader, not a collector. As has already been said, he loved Dickens, Thackeray, and Tennyson, and disliked Jane Austen, though it might have been supposed that her irony would have delighted him. For Trollope he always expressed admiration, accounted for possibly by the pictures of high-spirited girls whom Trollope drew. He disliked Kipling, but it is not true to say that he never admired the work of younger writers. He was particularly enthusiastic about Sir Anthony Hope Hawkins's *Dolly Dialogues*, which pleased him by their neat craftsmanship. Criminology was one of his favourite subjects. Sir Anthony Hope Hawkins says :

"When we had a house at Radlett, Gilbert came over to see us there, bringing a book containing a full account of Mr. William Weare, of atrocious memory. The house was near the scene of the murder that Weare committed, and Gilbert observed that the account would make cheerful evening reading for us."

Gilbert was at one time an admirable conjurer, and bought many books on the art of conjuring, which he apparently read to good purpose. Trollope and criminals, and Tennyson and conjurers—Gilbertian paradoxes; yet he twice told Rowland Brown that his favourite book was the Book of Job, launching out into unexpected eulogies on its "unique poetic splendour." It may be worth noting the rather remarkable common

tastes of Gilbert and Dickens, whom he loved so well. Both were excellent conjurers, and both were childlike in their love of acting and dressing up.

Photography was one of Gilbert's favourite amusements in his Grim's Dyke days, and he became very expert. He was capable of almost infinite patience in small matters of manual dexterity, while in concerns of greater importance he was often impatient.

While Gilbert loved the country, he had none of the ordinary country gentleman's love of those sports in which killing birds and beasts is an essential. When his garden was threatened with a plague of rabbits, it was his butler who shot them, because he was himself incapable of taking life. He once said to Mr. William Archer :

" I have a constitutional objection to taking life in any form. I don't think I ever wittingly killed a black-beetle. It is not humanity on my part. I am perfectly willing that other people should kill things for my comfort and advantage. But the mechanism of life is so wonderful that I shrink from stopping its action. To tread on a black-beetle would be to me like crushing a watch of complex and exquisite workmanship. . . . The time will no doubt come when the ' sport ' of the present day will be regarded very much as we regard the Spanish bull-fight or the bear-baiting of our ancestors."

Grim's Dyke was the reward of his labours. Its well-kept grounds; its shimmering lake—alas, to have a tragic history; its opportunities for pleasant local duties;—these were the things that Gilbert bought with his success, and they were the things that he prized the most. In nothing is character more clearly defined than in the gifts that a man gives to himself when achievement has spelled fortune. It is the revelation of Gilbert that he chose to live the life of a country gentleman in a beautiful well-kept house on the edge of London.

## CHAPTER XII

### GILBERT THE MAN

IN the preceding chapters there is, perhaps, sufficient material to re-create the character of the man who lives in literary history as the author of the *Bab Ballads* and the Savoy opera libretti. We venture to suggest that the testimony of old friends and associates, and particularly the letters given to the world for the first time in this volume, completely disprove the legend that Gilbert was lacking in consideration, in kindness, or in courtesy. It is abundantly evident that, in his collaboration with Sullivan, he was amazingly ready to subordinate his own judgment, and even his own art, to the wishes of the composer. His letters to Mr. and Mrs. D'Oyly Carte evidence appreciative friendship which even a rather bitter disagreement could not bring to an end. The memories of the players associated with him are memories of kindness and forbearance. Gilbert was a headstrong and impatient man, easily offended, but easily appeased. He would not lightly surrender what he believed were the just privileges of the dramatist in the theatre, nor would he suffer without vigorous protest what seemed to him unfair criticism or lack of proper appreciation. But when once the protest was made, the offence was soon forgotten and easily forgiven. He had more than one serious squabble with Clement Scott, the famous theatrical critic of the *Daily Telegraph*, who had been a colleague of his on the staff of *Fun*. We have quoted the angry letter that he wrote when Clement Scott repeated Burnand's feeble

witticism about *Broken Hearts*. But when Scott was broken and dying, Gilbert remembered nothing but the comradeship that had existed between them forty years before. In her book, *Old Days in Bohemian London*, Mrs. Clement Scott says :

" I like to think of Gilbert as the kindly creature of impulse I knew him to be, although that knowledge came to me when the dark veil of sickness had drawn itself with such a deadly grip about my home.

" At intervals, when the news of Clement's illness ultimately became public property, Gilbert's cards would be found in the letter-box with messages of gentle inquiry written upon them. It puzzled me to know how they got there, until one afternoon, going out of the door, I met W.S.G. face to face coming up the steps.

" Utterly confused, he turned to go away, but I stopped him, and when I told him of Clement's dangerous condition he was genuinely overcome.

" From that moment I don't think Gilbert missed many days without calling, writing, or telephoning. He helped me with my work, he wrote articles for me, and to his last hour I am sure he never breathed a word of what he had done for me.

" All the bitterness of the past was forgotten and put aside, old feuds were buried, and in the historical church at the end of Ely Place, Holborn, dedicated to the memory of Saint Ethelreda, where the funeral service was 'chaunted,' the one being whose eyes were most full of tender tears was Gilbert—at least, that is what friends told me, and I believed them. Doesn't this note strengthen my belief?—

Train: Euston to Harrow.  
Telephone: 19 Bushey.

GRIM'S DYKE,  
HARROW WEALD,  
September 18, 1903.

MY DEAR MRS. SCOTT,—

I am glad you like the article. It is true, every word of it. Will you let me have proofs of the others, which I hope will be of some use to you?

I return the letter you sent me. Thank you for letting me read it. How relieved I should be to hear good news of your poor invalid. Are you sure there is no hope? Will you ever be in a position to give me any?

Very sincerely yours,  
W. S. GILBERT

" When I hear others sneering at Gilbert's heartlessness, I recall those generous acts of his to Clement Scott—those journeys that he made so frequently, just to get a stray bit of news of his old comrade ;



his almost affectionate attitude directly he heard the truth—and I smile to myself, as I've smiled so many times when I've jostled against those queer people who live in such a tiny world of their own, a world that is full of nothing beyond 'I know,' 'I am sure,' 'I am certain,' a world which is minus all that is sincere and lacks facts."

Gilbert was always an alien in Bohemia. He conquered the theatre, but it was never his spiritual home. He was a man of methodical mind and legal training, caring for simple pleasures, with a deep instinctive dislike of poses and poseurs. It was inevitable that such a man should be to some extent misunderstood in a world where "make-up" is so often carried from the stage, to which it belongs, through the stage-door, and into the real world, where it is merely ridiculous. Even this misunderstanding has been grossly exaggerated, and we have it on the authority of Miss Jessie Bond that when the break in the Savoy partnership occurred, the players were almost unanimously in sympathy with Gilbert. It has been shown, too, in certain of the letters that we have printed, how determined he was that the chorus and the less important members of the company should always be treated justly and fairly. He hated injustice, and was always on the side of the weak.

Gilbert had a winsome affection for children and a Turgenev-like interest in young women and their careers. As we have already said, he hated killing of all sorts, and was utterly unable to understand how any rational being could find amusement in taking life. One of his greatest friends was an entomologist; but Gilbert had the same objection to the killing of butterflies as to the killing of rabbits, and he never discussed entomology with his friend.

One Sunday afternoon two famous stage stars arrived unexpectedly at Grim's Dyke. They happened on a carefully selected party. Lady Gilbert was painfully aware that her husband would not rejoice to hear of their coming. So she diplomatically told him they had driven down from London in a one-horse carriage. He at once said: "The

horse must be fed, so the man and woman can have some dinner."

Gilbert was immensely interested in the Bushey Heath Cottage Hospital, an interest which Lady Gilbert still retains. He was its honorary secretary from its beginning until his death. He was constant and punctual in his attendance at committee meetings, and he was always ready with practical suggestions and substantial help. In an entirely unostentatious manner, he often provided for necessary after-care for the patients, and he never missed Christmas entertainments and frequently arranged performances for the benefit of the hospital. Pain and suffering deeply affected him. When he visited the wards, it was with the sort of shyness of a man who felt he might be intruding on privacy, all the more to be resented in the case of a hospital patient without the means of ensuring that seclusion which all sick people desire.

Many stories could be told of Gilbert's practical and unobtrusive kindness. A boy was brought into the Bushey hospital suffering with a tuberculous ankle. He was ambitious to be an architect, and Gilbert, finding he had real talent, and realizing the handicap of a long stay in hospital, at once provided him with good teachers, and paid all costs. The lad was clever and hard-working, and his trouble was so far successfully dealt with that he was able to serve for a year in the war. When he left the hospital, Gilbert paid the premium to an architect, and his protégé is now a prosperous professional man.

One of the Bushey nurses whom Gilbert respected had an unusual surname. An audacious application for money came to him in the same name, and he would not dismiss it till he was sure the writer was "not a relation." On another occasion he found out that a lady earning her own living had contracted serious illness in the course of her work. For anything like complete recovery, two winters in a warmer climate were essential. Gilbert came to the rescue in such a manner that the hard task of acceptance became a pleasure.

When the South African war broke out Gilbert remembered that he was an old soldier and volunteered for service, and he was indignant and bitterly disappointed when he was rejected on account of his age—he was then sixty-three. However, he financed a younger man, who, without such help, would have been unable to volunteer.

Gilbert was generous, and when he gave he always gave gracefully. Bishop Welldon, a famous head master of Harrow School, says of him :

“To be the neighbour and the friend of Sir William and Lady Gilbert was one of the many privileges attaching to my life at Harrow. It was, I think, during my headmastership that they came to occupy their beautiful estate, Grim’s Dyke, at Harrow Weald. From that time they were pretty frequent visitors to Harrow School. As often as they were able, they were always ready to be present on Speech Days and on other special occasions of public interest, and Sir William, who became well known to the boys, was sure to be welcomed with hearty cheers as he descended the steps leading from the Speech-room. Not infrequently I was their guest, for they were good enough to suggest that I should drive over to Harrow Weald, generally on Sunday evenings, after service in the School Chapel, to meet their friends, among them being often well-known actors and actresses, whom it was naturally easier for them to entertain on Sundays than on other days of the week. Sir William was at his best on these Sunday evenings. He was not one of those writers who keep all their witticism for their books or plays. His conversation was as sparkling as his comedies. I can recall quite a number of his caustic yet kindly stories relating to people with whom he was not, or pretended not to be, on good terms. But alas! he was a sufferer from gout, and sometimes when I have gone to his house hoping for a talk with him, he was unable to join his party at the dinner-table. It is not perhaps realized that his jests bubbled up from a fountain whose waters were waters of bitterness. He made the world laugh at times while he himself was lying in pain.

“It is impossible, I think, to over-estimate the debt of Society to the authors who have shown that the richest humour may be the purest too, and that there is no necessary or natural connection between fun and folly or sin. Cervantes is one of those authors; Molière is another. But the wealth of clear and clean humour may be said to be in an especial degree the ornament of English literature. It is seen in Addison, in Thackeray; above all, in Dickens. Nobody, I suppose, has ever thrown round the world such a girdle of innocent laughter as Dickens. With men like these Sir William Gilbert deserves

to rank. Gilbertian humour is a thing by itself: subtle, whimsical, paradoxical, even absurd, but always pure. It has created numerous innocent scenes which live in the memory of all English-speaking people. It has given a new adjective to the English language.

"There have been few such artistic partnerships as that of Sir William Gilbert and Sir Arthur Sullivan. I used to think at Harrow that the partnership of Mr. E. Bowen and Mr. John Farmer in the composition of the school songs was a little like it. But it has enriched England, and, I may almost say, the British Empire, with the names and characters, with poems and melodies, which can never die.

"It was not my fortune to see much of the serious side underlying Sir William Gilbert's merriment, but I know that it was not wanting. I have been told that his favourite book, not only in the Bible, but in all literature, was the Book of Job. Perhaps it was the book which most appealed to him in his hours of suffering, when he felt all the dignity and the mystery of its soliloquies upon the eternal problems of life.

"Sir William Gilbert by his death left a void which has not been filled, and which will possibly never be filled, among his fellow-countrymen. Englishmen greater perhaps and cleverer, men of wider knowledge and deeper learning, more highly cultivated, more influential than he, may pass away and be forgotten. Other men rise up and fill their places. But Sir William Gilbert was uniquely loved while he lived, and has been uniquely mourned since his death, because there has not been, and perhaps cannot be, anyone quite like him; and the friends (of whom I claim to be one) who were glad and proud to be the associates of his earthly life feel ever more and more keenly, as the years flow onward, the greatness of the privilege that once was theirs."

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE LAST DAY AND AFTERWARDS

GILBERT once said suddenly : " I should like to die upon a summer day in my own garden." The wish was fulfilled in a way of which he had never dreamed. Nothing became Gilbert better in a long life, marked with many evidences of high courage, than the way he ended it.

The last day, May 29, 1911, dawned upon a glory of flowers and sunshine. Grim's Dyke was ablaze with masses of rhododendrons. It seemed, in the great heat, as if summer had outstripped spring. How was it spent? The short story of these last hours has a fragrance giving it pathetic interest, irradiated as they were by pleasant words and kindly deeds.

The morning was happily spent at Chelsea with Sir Charles and Lady Crutchley, for many years among his real intimates, and Lady Crutchley herself best tells how it passed :

" On the day of his death, Sir William came to the Royal Hospital to see the Annual Parade and Inspection, which was, and is still, known as Oak-apple Day. Lord Roberts held the Inspection, and my husband was then Lieut.-Governor at the Hospital. Sir William had come each year to the Inspection since my husband was appointed Lieut.-Governor, and always took the greatest interest in the Parade, and in the Pensioners. I remember asking him if he would not stay to luncheon, but he said he wanted to see Miss Fortescue, who had been ill, and must then hurry back to Grim's Dyke, as he had made an appointment to bathe in the lake with two girls. He went off with a cheery good-bye, and that was the last time I saw him—alas."

The following note to Miss Winifred Emery, niece of Mrs. Cyril Maude, explains the engagement to which Lady Crutchley refers :

GRIM'S DYKE,  
May 28, 1911.

DEAR MISS EMERY,—

I believe you arranged to come over and swim to-morrow (Monday). I am going to town on that morning, and shall return by the 3.20 Great Central, which arrives at Harrow-on-the-Hill at 3.38. I will drive you (and your young lady pupil if she likes to come) to Grim's Dyke in my motor.

Yours truly,  
W. S. GILBERT

On this bright May day Gilbert was in the best of health and spirits, cheered, no doubt, by the marked success of the macabre *Hooligan*, which had given him another much-desired triumph for a piece of serious dramatic work.

On leaving Chelsea, he went to the Junior Carlton Club for lunch. It has been told by Mrs. Kendal, in her frank avowal of hot altercations and warm reconciliations, how the breach with Gilbert was healed after many years. She and her husband met him at a London dinner-party, where the old relations were renewed. She added :

"We were not quarrelsome people, and we were very glad. We were gladder still when something else happened. For on May 29, 1911, Gilbert came into the Junior Carlton, where my husband was lunching at a table alone, and said, 'Kendal, may I sit down with you?' and they lunched together very pleasantly. In the evening we heard he had been drowned in his own lake."

The two had surely gossiped of the far-away theatrical days before Savoy opera flashed upon the eager town, of the time when Gilbert's dream of fame as a poetic dramatist was vastly stimulated by the aid of such artists as Mrs. Kendal and Miss Marion Terry.

Savoy opera had an interesting link with the events of the last day, for when he left the Junior Carlton it was, as he told Lady Crutchley, to go to see one who had not only been the loveliest of the "twenty love-sick maidens" in *Patience*, but who had a real claim on his friendship, for Miss Fortescue, in her long years of popular provincial management, had scored great successes with the plays that he loved best.

They had maintained an unbroken friendship for many years.

"And the past and its dear histories, and youth and its hopes and passions, and tones and looks, for ever echoing in the heart, and present in the memory." Gilbert once quoted Thackeray's words in a low voice as if they greatly moved him. They might have been in his mind as the end drew near, with far-away memories clustering about its coming. Miss Fortescue has herself told what happened :

"The last visit Gilbert ever paid was to me, on the last day of all, on his way back from Chelsea Hospital. I had had a bad accident in the Park, and had been thrown from my horse on the back of my head, so that the optic nerves were affected, and I had to be kept in almost complete darkness. My mother had told him this, and he wrote at once to ask if he might come and see me, in the midst of his many engagements at the height of the season. 'I won't ask what you think of her appearance, for you can scarcely see her,' remarked my mother. 'Her appearance matters nothing. It is her disappearance we could not stand,' was the quick reply. This was the pretty parting word—Gilbert's last jest."

"Gilbert was no plaster saint, but he was the best of friends," was Miss Fortescue's conclusion of the whole matter. It is good to think of him cheering the invalid by his kindness a few hours before his own death.

There has been an infinite variety of inaccuracies regarding the short and simple annals of the end. Mrs. Gascoyne, then Miss Winifred Emery, niece to Mrs. Cyril Maude, has told us what happened.

"Sir William Gilbert was teaching me to swim, and he invited me and a pupil of mine to Grim's Dyke on May 29th. We met him at Harrow station and motored to Grim's Dyke and went straight to the bathing pool. My pupil and I were in the water before Sir William had made an appearance. It was a very hot day, but the water struck very cold. My pupil was a much better swimmer than I, and soon outdistanced me. We were both unaware that the lake was deep further out, and presently she tried to touch bottom and found herself out of her depth. She shrieked out, 'Oh, Miss Emery, I am drowning!' I called to Sir William, who was on the steps, and he called out to her not to be frightened, and that he was coming. He swam out to her very quickly, and I heard him say: 'Put your hands on my shoulders and don't struggle.' This she did, but almost imme-

diately she called out that he had sunk under her hand and had not come up. We both called to him, but got no answer. I tried to reach them, but soon got out of my depth and could do nothing but call for help. My pupil managed to struggle to the bank, and presently the gardener came and got out the boat, but it seemed a long time before they recovered the body."

So died a very gallant gentleman!

Life was extinct before the arrival of Dr. Shackleton, and later Dr. Wilson; and Miss Costello, the nurse from Bushey Cottage Hospital, who performed the last duties, has mentioned that as there was no water in the lungs, the instantaneous death was not due to drowning. Mrs. Gascoyne's statement shows it to be indubitable that he acted on the certainty that he was answering a cry for help from one in urgent need. It was a splendid death for a man of seventy-four, still active and determined, of high courage, impatient of physical suffering, fearful, above all, of mental decay; a far better end, indeed, than months of lingering illness. The last line of *The Hooligan* was thus strangely spoken by the doctors—"Dead—Heart Failure." Nor was the customary Gilbertian paradox lacking, inasmuch as his picturesque pet plaything, the little artificial lake, was the cause and scene of his death.

No one has ever bathed there since. It is a place of silence, where London seems a thousand miles away. In May the tiny island in the centre of the lake flames with rosy azaleas. The water's edge is fringed with golden iris and forget-me-nots, and beside the winding pathway there is white heather for good fortune. It is all set in a greenwood carpeted with half-uncurled bracken ferns, where the shadowy fading bluebells might be fancied to ring a muffled peal from fairyland.

A more perfect day than Gilbert's last never dawned, and if his spirit could return, there is bizarre company for it, for quite near and much the worse for wear is the one statue of Charles II, removed by the Blackwells—former owners of the land—from Soho Square. The presence of the king "who



never said a foolish thing" does not seem quite inappropriate.

Miss Cora Pillans, the matron of the Bushey hospital, who speedily followed Miss Costello, bears testimony to the dignity of Gilbert in death. There was no suggestion of any struggle disturbing the calm serenity of expression, and a friend who stood alone in the still presence in the twilight has said: "There was the strongest likeness to Socrates."

Lady Gilbert's near relatives being distant, many duties they felt to be privileged devolved on Rowland-Brown and upon Sir Charles Crutchley, who came to Grim's Dyke immediately. The genuine grief of the servants said much, especially that of the faithful and attached butler, Warrilow—a quaint personality, once a music-hall performer, who remained with Lady Gilbert till his death in 1921.

The inquest was held on May 31, a tropical day crashing into a violent thunderstorm.

Early upon the brilliant morning of June 2, the body of Sir William Gilbert was cremated at Golder's Green. Gilbert held strong views in favour of cremation, and it was no surprise to find it directed by him. In accordance with the wish of Lady Gilbert, and in real harmony with the austere side of a mind to which funeral pomp would have been abhorrent, the arrangements for the burial of the urn in Great Stanmore churchyard were of the simplest. Three hundred wreaths lay fading in the sun, among them one from Mr. Whitelaw Reid, then American Ambassador, and of them all, surely Gilbert would have been best pleased by a nameless trophy of roses "from his little Columbine," who had danced with him in those gay days when it was said of him that never was such a harlequin.

Among those present at the funeral were Lord Mersey, Sir Francis and Lady Burnand, Sir Arthur Pinero, Sir C. Montague Lush, Mr. Arthur Collins, Sir A. Scott-Gatty, Mr. Cyril Maude, Mr. Arthur Bouchier, Sir John and Lady Hare, Lady Tree, Sir Hubert von Herkomer, Mr. Rupert D'Oyly Carte, Lord

Burnham, Sir L. Alma-Tadema, Sir Charles Matthews, Mr. A. Gray, K.C., and Sir Squire and Lady Bancroft.

The beautiful figure of an angel, the work of Mr. Pomeroy, A.R.A., watches over a plain slab of white marble inscribed only with name and dates. "The source of *innocent* merriment" had no need of the tombstone eulogy he of all men would have most despised. Lady Gilbert erected a memorial tablet with bas-relief portrait in Harrow Weald church, the work of Sir Bertram Mackennal, R.A. As a likeness it is less striking than that which was a labour of love to Sir George Frampton, R.A.

Sir George Frampton's bronze medallion, with its graceful figures of Comedy and Tragedy, was most happily inspired, and is excellent as a portrait. It stands appropriately opposite Charing Cross Station, close to the memorial to Sir Arthur Sullivan. The inscription is worthy of it, and regarding it Sir Anthony Hope writes :

"Whilst on the committee of the Authors' Society I had something to do with the memorial. The words on the memorial are mine, except that I put them into prose first.—'Folly was his foe, and wit his weapon'—and somebody (I forget who) pointed out that, transposed, they would make a line, and this was adopted."

From a note in his diary it would seem as if the more euphonious version came from Rowland-Brown, who selected the text from the Proverbs for Harrow Weald church, "The tongue of the just is as choice silver," for, like Mr. Carlyon, he had always been struck with Gilbert's strictly just attitude upon the Bench and elsewhere.

Sir William Gilbert's estate was valued for probate at £110,971. Sir Arthur Sullivan left estate of the gross value of £54,527, and Mr. D'Oyly Carte £240,817. Gilbert's will is interesting because of the large benefits that will ultimately accrue to the two principal theatrical charities.

The executors of his will were his widow and Miss Nancy McIntosh, both of Grim's Dyke, and Mr. Percival Birkett, solicitor. Sir William Gilbert left the portraits of himself

by Frank Holl, R.A., and Herman Gustave Herkomer, and the bronze statuette of himself by Andrea Lucchesi, to his wife for life, and, subject thereto, he left his portrait by Holl to the National Portrait Gallery, and if it should not be accepted by the trustees, then to the Garrick Club, whom failing, to Miss Nancy McIntosh, and his portrait by Herkomer to Miss Nancy McIntosh, and the bronze statuette of himself by Andrea Lucchesi to Cora Pillans, matron of the Bushey Heath Cottage Hospital.

He left his leasehold premises, the Garrick Theatre, with fixtures, fittings, etc., to his wife for life, with remainder to Miss Nancy McIntosh for life, and ultimate remainder to the Actors' Benevolent Fund, "absolutely for the benefit of the said fund, to be retained, sold, or otherwise dealt with as the Executive Committee for the time being of the said fund in their absolute discretion shall think most desirable in the interests of the said fund." He bequeathed £200 to the Bushey Heath Cottage Hospital; £100 to Cora Pillans; £5 for each completed year of service to his butler, cook-house-keeper, lady's-maid, head housemaid, head gardener, head chauffeur, and his bailiff in his service at his decease and not under notice to leave for misconduct; £3 for each completed year of service similarly to each indoor under-servant and his second chauffeur; £2 for each completed year of service similarly to each of his gardeners, labourers (including cowman and night watchman) employed at Grim's Dyke. His stock of cigars is to be divided equally between Carlo Perugini and Henry Rowland-Brown; his microscope and fittings by Beck to Henry Rowland Brown; his cameras and photographic apparatus to Arthur Helsham-Jones, J.P., of Billericay, Essex. £100 each for the purchase of mementoes goes to A. H. Brown; Sybil, wife of Major-General Crutchley; Mabel, wife of Captain Gordon Dugdale; Annie Gordon Scott; and Mary, wife of Major Talbot, of Balcombe, Sussex; and £100 each goes to Carlo Perugini, Sybil Carlisle, Mary Gilham, and Rachel, wife of Major Neil le Mesurier.

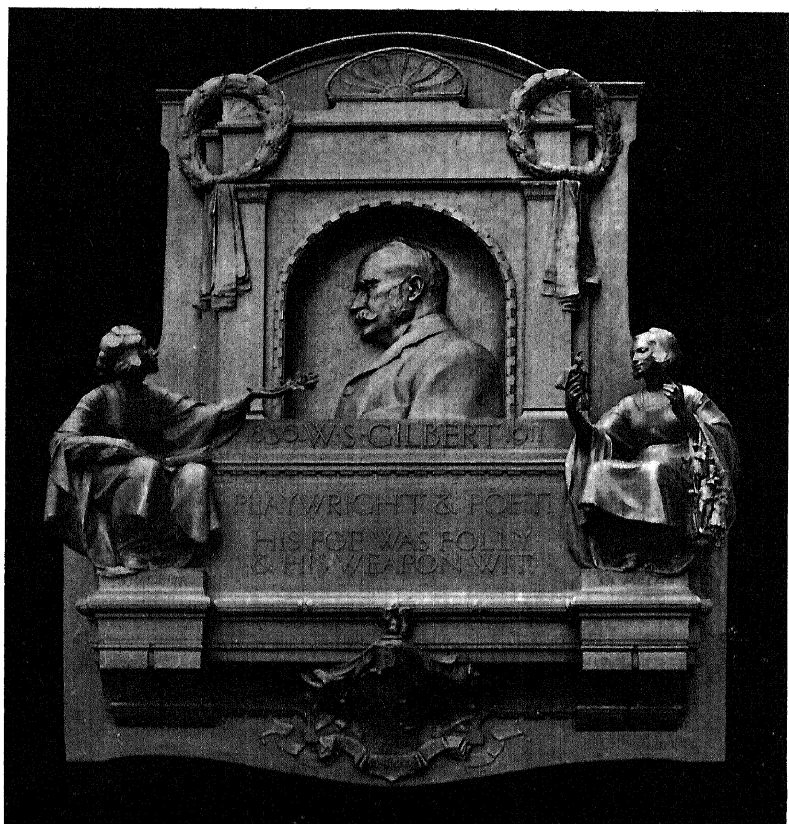
The testator left to his wife his residence, Grim's Dyke, and all his effects there not otherwise disposed of, his cash in house or at bank, stocks and shares in his name, and copy-rights, and all other leasehold properties not otherwise bequeathed. He left the residue of his property to his wife for life, with remainder as to one-half equally between Stanley Weigall and his wife, Mary Weigall; Mary, daughter of the late Alfred Weigall, of Salisbury; Captain Harold Turner and Captain Herbert Guy Turner, sons of Major-General Turner; but the bequests to each of these five legatees is not to exceed £4,000, and any balance goes to the Royal General Theatrical Fund. The other half is to be divided equally between the Rev. Gilbert Weigall, Edith Weigall, the Rev. Spencer Weigall, Howard Weigall, Harold Weigall, Cyril Weigall, Mary Wise, Dorothy Weigall, and Audrey Weigall, the share of each of these nine legatees being limited to £1,000, and any balance being payable to the Royal General Theatrical Fund. He expressed the wish that his wife should keep up his subscription of £21 per annum to the "Kitty Cot" in the Victoria Hospital for Children at Chelsea, and that of 10 guineas per annum to the Bushey Heath Cottage Hospital, and that she should, by her will, leave her residuary estate upon the same trusts, as far as practicable, as those upon which he had left the residue of his own property.

## CHAPTER XIV

### GILBERT THE ARTIST

**C**HARLES DICKENS and William Schwenk Gilbert were the two greatest English humorous writers of the Victorian era. As a writer of humorous verse, Gilbert has no peer in English literature. As a dramatist, in one of the most fortunate collaborations in history, he gave to the English theatre its first considerable drama for many generations. The story of the English drama has no parallel in the records of any other art. It begins with the splendour of Shakespeare, and then for two and a half centuries there follows a period of almost unbroken barrenness. We do not forget Congreve, but what is Congreve compared with Molière? And the other Restoration dramatists appear to us to be rated, largely, perhaps, owing to the enthusiasm of Charles Lamb, far above their artistic merits. We do not forget Sheridan, but what is Sheridan but Congreve in a more genteel guise? And after Sheridan, who is there until the first Gilbert and Sullivan operetta was produced at the Opéra-Comique in 1877? No one but a theatrical expert can even remember the names of the dramatists who wrote for the theatre during the first two-thirds of the last century, with the possible exception of that of Tom Robertson, whose "bread-and-butter" comedies were applauded as realistic, so hopeless was the bombastic artificiality of the drama of the time. As Mr. Shaw once wrote, Robertson arrived "after years of sham heroics and superfluous balderdash."

The Gilbert and Sullivan operas are a popular national



SIR GEORGE FRAMPTON'S MEDALLION ON THE VICTORIA EMBANKMENT



possession, rivalled only in their widespread and apparently permanent appeal by the plays of Shakespeare and the novels of Dickens. They brought living and enduring art into a valley of dead bones. Gilbert, as Mr. Archer has said, "restored the literary self-respect of the English stage."

The first fact of immense interest in Gilbert's career is that his genius was sharply limited and defined. He was a humorist with a great technical equipment as a writer of verse and as a constructor of plays. When he ceased to be a humorist, when he turned on the one hand to satire, or on the other hand to sentiment, his work becomes artificial and far less technically excellent. The rhyming and the rhythm of his topsy-turvy poems are delightful. The satirical verses are almost always on a lower level. The blank verse is smooth, but comparatively undistinguished.

Gilbert was a great Victorian. He had all the prejudices of a Victorian of the professional class. He distrusted enthusiasms and mocked at emotion. He had none of Dickens's tremendous sympathy. He disliked all "movements," and was irritated by most reformers. While at heart a Tory of the most die-hard description, he had as little respect for highly placed personages as Palmerston had for the Prince Consort. He was almost fiercely English, but he laughed at jingoism. In an admirable essay written after Gilbert's death, Mr. Chesterton pointed out that his description of the English as a stupid people evidenced almost complete misunderstanding. The English are neither stupid nor humourless. Like the Bishop of Rum-ti-Foo, they never fail in appreciation of a joke. The common English failing, as Mr. Chesterton says, is to miss the fact that the humorist, the Dickens or the Gilbert, is generally laughing at the English themselves.

As a framework for his humour Gilbert invented the Topsy-turvydom, which has come to be generally known as "Gilbertian," and which consists in giving to his characters qualities



exactly opposite to those that they would possess in real life. Gilbert created what Maurice Baring has well called a "cuckoo-land," in which it is only the possible that never happens. This cuckoo-land came into being when he wrote the first *Bab Ballad*, and it was the scene of almost all his libretti. In his creation of Topsy-turvydom Gilbert was to some extent anticipated by Gay. The *Beggar's Opera* is Gilbertian. Gay's highwayman is of the same breed as Gilbert's Lord Chancellor. But it is to a far greater than Gay that Gilbert has been, as it seems to us, justly compared. The atmosphere of Gilbert is the atmosphere of Aristophanes. Mr. Walter Sichel has said that the world both of Aristophanes and Gilbert "is one not of nonsense, but of sense upside down. It laughs thought into us. And though it is in both cases a sphere as light as down, it is not ethereal, but a borderland between empyrean and the too solid earth." Aristophanes is the greater artist. He wrote with a fierce indignation which Gilbert never felt; he employed his supreme irony to pillory gross evils. Gilbert, for the most part, is content to emphasize the absurdity of smaller foibles. Aristophanes was partly Crusader, partly Jeremiah. Gilbert, again to quote Mr. Sichel, was the apostle of "cultivated common sense."

It was indeed common sense for which Gilbert always stood. He often makes common sense stand on its head, but that is only done to prove to us its uncommon merits. Like most men who tilt at sentiment, Gilbert was at heart a sentimentalist, as is proved by his letters and the incidents of his life. His literary enthusiasms were for Tennyson, Thackeray, and Dickens—unlike in everything except that each, in his own manner, was a Victorian sentimentalist---and he disliked the unsentimental realism of Jane Austen. For all this, it is not altogether paradoxical that Gilbert, who revelled in paradox, should often be compared to Mr. Bernard Shaw, who has described himself as "the most humorously extravagant paradoxer in London." Mr. Shaw has far wider interests than Gilbert had, and the opinions and prejudices of the two

men are as the poles asunder. But "common sense" is the foible of them both, compelling them to fling realistic stones at romantic illusions. In *Arms and the Man*, for instance, Shaw attacks the idea that a soldier is necessarily a strutting hero, unaffected by fatigue and nerves, and surely the policemen in *The Pirates of Penzance* are very near relatives of the chocolate-cream soldier. Mr. Shaw has a genius for the creation of self-assured common-sense women, and Lady Cecily Waynflete in *Captain Brassbound's Conversion* might sing with Yum-Yum in *The Mikado*:

" Ah, pray, make no mistake,  
We are not shy !  
We're very wide awake,  
The moon and I."

There is hardly any sentiment in Mr. Shaw. Gilbert was a sentimentalist tempered by common sense, and his common sense and his vision led him to anticipate Mr. Shaw in laughing at love-making and romance, and in the libretti his attitude to love is certainly not "to worship it, deify it, and imply that it alone makes our life worth living." Lady Cecily Waynflete declares: "I've married no less than seventeen men to other women. And they all opened the subject by saying that they would never marry anybody but me." And Gilbert loved to suggest that it really does not matter whom one marries so long as the normal man selects the normal woman.

The dragoons in *Patience* cheerfully sing, "We don't care, we don't care," when they are thrown over by their young women, and in the same opera there is the famous gibe at the posing imitation passion of the people who are nowadays described as the "intelligentzia":

" Then a sentimental passion of a vegetable fashion must excite your  
languid spleen,  
An attachment *à la* Plato for a bashful young potato, or a too-too  
French French bean !

Though the Philistines may jostle, you will rank as an apostle in the  
high æsthetic band,

If you walk down Piccadilly with a poppy or a lily in your mediæval  
hand.

And every one will say,

As you walk your flowery way,

If he's content with a vegetable love, which would certainly not  
suit *me*,

Why what a most particularly pure young man this pure young  
man must be ! "

Nevertheless, Gilbert—here very unlike Mr. Shaw—could  
write charmingly of love :

" Love that no wrong can cure,

Love that is always new,

That is the love that's pure,

That is the love that's true ! "

For the English girl, even more unsentimental in these  
strenuous athletic days than she was forty years ago,  
Gilbert had an unqualified regard, again because common  
sense and not sentimentality recognizes her quality and  
charm :

" Her soul is sweet as the ocean air,

For prudery knows no haven there ;

To find mock-modesty, please apply

To the conscious blush and the downcast eye.

Rich in the things contentment brings,

In every pure enjoyment wealthy,

Blithe as a beautiful bird she sings,

For body and mind are hale and healthy.

Her eyes they thrill with a right goodwill—

Her heart is as light as a floating feather,

As pure and bright as the mountain rill

That leaps and laughs in the Highland heather ! "

Mr. Shaw is the hero, or the heroine, of all his plays. It  
was not Gilbert's habit often to exploit his own personality  
in his plays, but it is fair to assume that Jack Point in *The  
Yeomen of the Guard* is, at least to some extent, the author  
himself, and Jack Point's song seems fairly to represent  
Gilbert's own view of himself as an artist :

" I've jest and joke,  
And quip and crank,  
For lowly folk  
And men of rank.  
I ply my craft  
And know no fear,  
I aim my shaft  
At prince or peer.  
At peer or prince—at prince or peer  
I aim my shaft and know no fear.

" I've wisdom from the East and from the West,  
That's subject to no academic rule ;  
You may find in it the jeering of a jest,  
Or distil it from the folly of a fool.  
I can teach you with a quip, if I've a mind ;  
I can trick you into learning with a laugh ;  
Oh, winnow all my folly, and you'll find  
A grain or two of truth among the chaff !

" I can set a braggart quailing with a quip,  
The upstart I can wither with a whim ;  
He may wear a merry laugh upon his lip,  
But his laughter has an echo that is grim.  
When they're offered to the world in merry guise,  
Unpleasant truths are swallowed with a will—  
For he who'd make his fellow-creatures wise  
Should always gild the philosophic pill ! "

While in his personal life Gilbert had a genuine and diffident respect for sorrow and trouble, he had little knowledge of the life of the poor and no sympathy whatever with the political and social demands of the wage-earning classes. In *The Sorcerer* one of the characters describes the working man as " a noble creature when he is quite sober ; " and in the *Gondoliers* writing of the king, who was eager to abolish social distinctions, he concludes :

" When every one is somebodee,  
Then no one's anybody."

But if he was no democrat, Gilbert was no panderer to high position. Politicians always moved his deepest scorn :

"Ye supple M.P.'s who go down on your knees,  
 Your precious identity sinking,  
 And vote black and white as your leaders indite  
 (Which saves you the trouble of thinking).  
 For your country's good fame, her repute, or her shame,  
 You don't care the snuff of a candle—  
 But you're paid for your game when you're told that your name  
 Will be graced by a baronet's handle.  
 Oh, allow me to give you a word of advice,  
 The title's uncommonly dear at the price."

He hated philanthropists as much as he hated politicians, and while the accusation that Gilbert took a rather cruel delight in laughing at the waning charms of elderly women cannot be denied, it is the old woman posing as a girl at whom he laughs, and not the old woman content with dignified age.

The writer of a *Quarterly Review* article that appeared some twenty-five years ago said :

"The world of Mr. Gilbert is a farce, and on the whole a sorry farce withal; he is something of a melancholy Jacques."

This assertion is justified by the song in *The Gondoliers* :

"Try we life-long, we can never  
 Straighten out life's tangled skein,  
 Why should we, in vain endeavour,  
 Guess and guess and guess again?  
 Life's a pudding full of plums,  
 Care's a canker that benumbs.  
 Wherefore waste our elocution  
 On impossible solution?  
 Life's a pleasant institution,  
 Let us take it as it comes!

'Set aside the dull enigma,  
 We shall guess it all too soon;  
 Failure brings no kind of stigma—  
 Dance we to another tune!  
 String the lyre and fill the cup,  
 Lest on sorrow we should sup.  
 Hop and skip to Fancy's fiddle,  
 Hands across and down the middle—  
 Life's perhaps the only riddle  
 That we shrink from giving up!"

On the other hand Gilbert writes in *Ruddigore* :

“ Every season has its cheer,  
Life is lovely all the year.”

And there is certainly no pessimism in the exquisite lines :

“ Is life a boon ?  
If so, it must befall  
That Death, when'er he call,  
Must call too soon.  
Though four-score years he give,  
Yet one would pray to live  
Another moon !  
What kind of plaint have I  
Who perish in July ?  
I might have had to die  
Perchance in June.”

Gilbert's resemblance to Aristophanes does not only lie in his attitude to life and his ironic comments on contemptible shams and impostures. There is in Hookham Frere's metrical translation of Aristophanes an extraordinary suggestion both of Gilbertian matter and manner. Aristophanes speaks of a poet :

“ That so oft on the stage, in the flower of his age,  
Had defeated the chorus his rivals had led,  
With his sounds of all sort that were uttered in sport,  
With whims and vagaries unheard of before,  
With feathers and wings and a thousand gay things  
That in frolicsome fancies his choruses wore.”

Gilbert was something more than a witty commentator on life. He was a poet with a gift of what has well been called “madrigal melody,” and he is the author of many lyrics almost equal in beauty to those of Tennyson himself, even though they lack the passion that is the lyric's glory. One could prove this assertion by dozens of examples, among them this from *Patience* :

“ Love is a plaintive song,  
Sung by a suffering maid,  
Telling a tale of wrong,  
Telling of hope betrayed.

"Tuned to each changing note,  
 Sorry when *he* is sad,  
 Blind to his every mote,  
 Merry when he is glad !

"Love that no wrong can cure,  
 Love that is always new,  
 That is the love that's pure,  
 That is the love that's true ! "

There is, too, a "perfume of Herrick" in the song in *Princess Ida* :

"Whom thou hast chained must wear his chain,  
 Thou canst not set him free;  
 He wrestles with his bonds in vain  
 Who lives by loving thee !

"If heart of stone for heart of fire,  
 Be all thou hast to give,  
 If dead to me my heart's desire,  
 Why should I wish to live ? "

As a writer of nonsense verses, ingenious in their rhymes and audacious in their surprises, Gilbert is supreme in our literature, Calverley being, indeed, his only possible rival. He can at times write such dreadful lines as :

"In short when I've a smattering of elementary strategy,  
 You'll say a better major-general has never sat a-gee."

But generally the whimsicality of the imagination is equalled by the felicity of the verse :

"Cheerily carols the lark  
 Over the cot.  
 Merrily whistles the clerk  
 Scratching a blot.  
 But the lark  
 And the clerk,  
 I remark,  
 Comfort me not !

"Over the ripening peach  
 Buzzes the bee.  
 Splash on the billowy beach  
 Tumbles the sea.

But the peach  
And the beach,  
They are each  
Nothing to me ! ”

The two lines

“ Splash on the billowy beach  
Tumbles the sea ”

are really magnificent in their truth and their beauty.

There are two other aspects of Gilbert's genius that must not be forgotten. He had a great power of parody, generally used by him to imitate a school rather than an individual, which, as Mr. Maurice Baring has suggested, is shared to some extent by a later poet, Mr. E. V. Knox. The best of these parodies is in *Patience*, when Gilbert is laughing at the Bunthornes, who write distressing verse in our generation as they did in his :

“ Oh ! to be wafted away  
From this black aceldama of sorrow,  
When the dust of an earthy to-day  
Is the earth of a dusty to-morrow ! ”

Gilbert, too, like all humorists, had a gift of pathos. This is evident more in his early plays perhaps than in the operas, where in a very English manner he obviously fights against the tendency to emphasize the sadness of life, and he often hides his sighs with a laugh. But the pathos will out, even in the operas. A notable instance is the duet in *The Gondoliers* :

“ Dead as the last year's leaves—  
As gathered flowers—ah ! woe is me !  
Dead as the garnered sheaves,  
That love of ours—ah ! woe is me !  
Born but to fade and die,  
When hope was high,  
Dead, and as far away  
As yesterday—ah ! woe is me ! ”

Gilbert and Sullivan have given modern England songs to remember and to sing, the only equivalent to the folk-songs of a simpler age. Every one knows the Sullivan tunes, and



most people know the Gilbert verses. They are a possession keenly appreciated, held in such high esteem that when on one occasion, some years ago, a comedian "gagged" in one of the Savoy operas, he was strongly admonished by a member of the gallery to stick to the text.

Gilbert had little ear for melody, but he had a supreme sense of rhythm, and he took a master-craftsman's joy in using a hundred different metres and conceits. The song "Were I thy bride," in *The Yeomen of the Guard*, was definitely written to prove that the English language was as tuneful as the Italian—a fact hotly denied by the majority of Victorian musical critics, and apparently disproved by English writers of doggerel verse.

Rowland-Brown has well said that as soon as Gilbert found himself he came at once into his own. It would be difficult to find another literary artist whose work varied so little in its inspiration and in its quality from the beginning to the end. The earliest *Bab Ballads* and the last of the libretti reflect the same whimsical outlook on life, and are distinguished by the same felicity of expression and audacity of idea. It was only when the ironic poet set out to imitate Robertson and write sentimental comedies that he fell away from his own high standard of achievement.

Gilbert left no papers, neither completed nor unfinished manuscripts. There were no literary remains when he died. The one exception is a small notebook, in which, some years before his death, he had jotted down a number of ideas for a musical play called *Topsy-turvydom*, with which the Criterion Theatre was opened.

The conditions in *Topsy-turvydom* were to be exactly what its name implies. Here is a quotation from the notebook:

"Poverty is honoured—wealth despised. Ignorance is honoured—learning despised.

"Children are born learned, gradually forget everything until, as old men, they are utterly ignorant. Women are bold, men bashful. Vice is rewarded. Virtue punished. Judges administer injustice.

Dishonesty is rewarded. Cowards are honoured. Brave men elbowed aside. Therefore the most ignorant, the most vicious, the most lazy man is made Ruler. Women hate their husbands. Thieves are employed to arrest honest men."

It may perhaps be suggested that the idea is not so topsy-turvy as Gilbert supposed, for while in the real world poverty is not honoured and wealth is certainly not despised, learning is still held in small esteem, dishonesty is frequently rewarded, virtue is quite commonly punished, and ignorance is often to be found in high places.

Here is another entry in the notebook. This time it is an idea for a court scene:

"The Prime Minister—a most popular man—enters with top and hoop. He is received with hoots and groans, this being the topsy-turvy method of expressing applause. M.P. inquires why he is hooted in this way. Mentor explains that it is because he is so popular. He was raised to his present office because he is so unfit for it. Why raise him to an office for which he is so obviously unfitted? Why? Because this is topsy-turvydom. 'Well,' says M.P., 'I never heard anything like it before.' 'No,' says Mentor, 'you wouldn't be likely to—in England.' M.P. must go through certain adventures involving an encounter with such typical topsy-turvyites as will best help the satire. So he gets involved in a breach of promise action, having taken a great fancy to a pretty woman, while alleged to be engaged 'to another ugly one to whom he takes a great dislike.' The father of the ugly one (the Prime Minister) says that he has noticed that M.P. has taken a great dislike to his daughter. . . . M.P. admits it. 'You don't admire her at all.' M.P. says, 'Not at all.'

"Then I am authorized to say that she has taken just such a detestation to you.' M.P. is wholly indifferent. 'Then take her and be unhappy!' 'Eh!' 'You hate her. She hates you. Marry and be wretched. It is the law of the land.' 'Never!'"

Here is a genuine Savoy opera idea, and it is quoted here as a proof that the Gilbertian trait of standing the world on its head was in its creator's mind long before it made him famous.

Gilbert is a difficult man to place, as Mr. Archer says; "a crotchety genius, a man of unaccommodating angles, whom it is impossible to fit into any pigeon-hole of classification."

"His foe was folly and his weapon wit." George Mere-

dith's words admirably apply to Gilbert: "He was, of course, a sentimentalist and a satirist, entitled to lash the age and complain of human nature." Mrs. Meynell spoke his epitaph when she said, on hearing of Gilbert's death: "We have lost a poet."

## APPENDIX

### THE "LOST BABS"

The following *Bab Ballads* were printed in *Fun*, but were not included in any of the collections made by Gilbert.

#### PRINCE IL BALEINE



When autumn boat and train  
Bore London folk to pleasure,  
The good Prince Il Baleine  
He sought, across the main,  
Amusement for his leisure.

A dusty time, and long,  
He'd had at balls and races,  
At crowded levee throng,  
At play and concert song,  
And various other places.

But, ah! the British Snob  
 Besieged that Prince, in plenty:  
 The Snob adores a Nob,  
 And follows him, to rob  
 His *dolce far niente*!

And finding that the Prince  
 Much eagerness to know them  
 Did not at once evince,  
 They did not matters mince,  
 But begged himself he'd show them.

' Our wishes do not baulk,  
 Throw off this English shyness—  
 And show us how you walk,  
 And let us hear you talk—  
 Now do, your Royal Highness!

" You're too reserved by half:  
 Begin perambulating;  
 We've paid to see you laugh—  
 We've paid to hear you chaff  
 Four gentlemen in waiting.

" Come sit and eat an ice,  
 Or drain a bumping measure;  
 We've practised much device,  
 And paid a heavy price,  
 To see you take your leisure."

(It grieved that Prince Balneus—  
 Most sensitive of fishes—  
 It always gives him pain  
 When people can't obtain  
 The fullness of their wishes.

But doctors grave had said,  
 " Hang up your stick and beaver;  
 You *must* have rest and shade,  
 Or you will soon be laid  
 Upon your back with fever.")

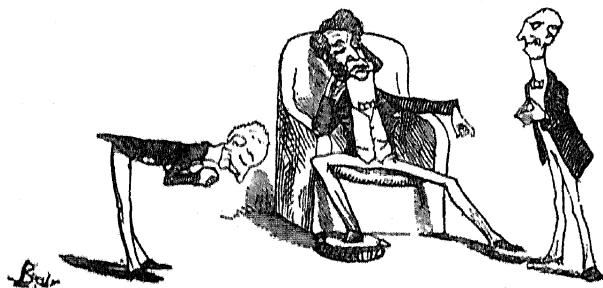
No morning when he woke  
 But British Snobs addressed him;  
 His peace of mind they broke,  
 So up he rose, and spoke  
 These words to those who pressed him:

" Oh, over-loyal throng,  
 Be guided, pray, by reason :  
 You may encore a song  
 (Though that, I think, is wrong),  
 But not a London Season !

" I'm told to lie me down  
 And rest me at my leisure ;  
 But here's my valet, Brown,  
 He's not much worked in town,  
 He'll take my place with pleasure !

" I am his special care ;  
 He brushes, combs, and laves me,  
 He parts my chestnut hair—  
 He folds the coats I wear—  
 And strops the blade that shaves me.

" He knows my little ways  
 And, though it's not expected  
 He'll match my Royal blaze,  
 Yet, basking in my rays,  
 He'll shine with light reflected."

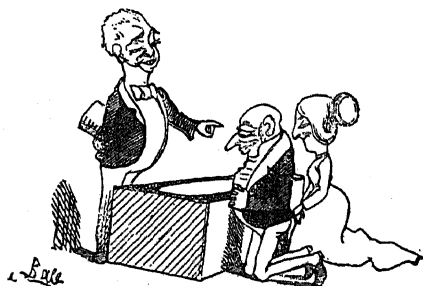


" Oh, my ! " the people cried,  
 " To Mister Brown I'll bow me !  
 Oh, ain't he dignified,  
 Yet not a spark of pride !  
 Oh, Mister Brown, allow me !

" And so you wash the Prince,  
 And pack his clothes for starting,  
 You scent with jasmine leaf  
 His pocket-handkerchief,  
 And regulate his parting !

" And that, I understand,  
 Is your department, is it ?  
 And this then is the hand  
 That combs at his command ?  
 Oh, please, do let me kiss it !

" Is this (oh, treat of treats !)  
 The bedroom that you sleep in ?  
 When cloyed with Royal sweets,  
 And these the very sheets  
 Which every night you creep in ?



" And in this bath you tub,  
 Ere out of doors you sally ?  
 And do these flesh-gloves scrub—  
 These dainty towels rub—  
 The Prince's happy *valet* ? "

The Snobs with joy insane,  
 Kotoo'd to Brown, unseemly ;  
 And Brown does not complain,  
 While good Prince II Baleine  
 Enjoys his rest extremely.

## FANNY AND JENNY



Fanny and Jenny in Paris did dwell,  
 Miss Jane was a dowdy, Miss Fanny a swell—  
 Each went for to dine at a quarter to four—  
 At her own little favourite Restauratore—  
 Fanny of Bertram and Roberts was fond,  
 While Jenny she worshipped her Spiers and Pond.

Fanny was pretty and piquante and  
 pert,  
 Her manners were shortish and so  
 was her skirt,  
 While Jenny the elder would make  
 a man wince,  
 In a dress of the mode of a century  
 since.  
 Bertram and Roberts's Fanny was  
 blonde,  
 And dark was the Jenny of Spiers  
 and Pond.





Jane lived in a modest and lady-like way :  
 To Spiers and Pond she went every day,  
 She'd order up beef and potatoes as well,  
 And cut off the joint until senseless she fell :  
 (She fed herself daily all reason beyond  
 To gaze all the longer at Spiers and Pond.)



But Fanny, that frolicsome, frivolous  
 maid  
 (Whose tastes were more airy than  
 Jenny's the staid),  
 To Bertram and Roberts would hie her  
 away,  
 And swallow plum-pudding the rest of  
 the day.  
 The best of her dresses Miss Fanny she  
 donned  
 (As Jenny did also for Spiers and  
 Pond).

The Restaurateurs didn't seem for to care  
 For Jenny's soft ogle or Fanny's fond stare.  
 Said Jenny, "Don't let us be taken aback,  
 We're probably on an erroneous tack,  
 And Bertram and Roberts of *me* may be fond,  
 While *you* are beloved by Spiers and Pond ! "

"Oh, Bertram and R., are you dying for me,  
 Or am I the chosen of Spiers and P. ?  
 Oh, which is the angel and fostering star  
 Of Spiers and P., or of Bertram and R. ?  
 Which firm have I collared in Venus's bond ?  
 Say, Bertram and Roberts—speak, Spiers and Pond !

"Perhaps if you cannot completely agree  
 Which of you shall have Fanny and which shall have me,  
 And you wish for to go for to do what is right,  
 You will go to the Bois de Boulogne for to fight—  
 It's the mode that is popular in the *beau monde*,—  
 Will Bertram and Roberts fight Spiers and Pond ? "

But Spiers and Pond are but perishing clay,  
 So they gasped and they gurgled and fainted away—  
 The burden of Bertram and Roberts's song  
 Was "Goodness ! how shocking ! Oh, please go along !

With neither for worlds would we ever abscond ! ”

And “ Ditto for us,” exclaimed Spiers and Pond.

Said Fanny, “ How bold, and how dreadfully rude ! ”

“ Those men are too forward,” said Jenny the prude,

“ Such youth and such beauty as both of us own

Are safe in the walls of a convent alone,  
We shall there be the coarse persecutions beyond

Of Bertram and Roberts and Spiers and Pond.”



### SIR CONRAD AND THE RUSTY ONE



A knight for doughty doings rife,  
With falchion, lance, or bill,  
Was fair Sir Conrad Talbotype,  
Of Talbotypetonneville.

His parents he had never known  
(The sting of many a taunt) ;  
He had one relative alone—  
A sweet, dyspeptic aunt.

*Baf*

A time must come when loving hearts  
Must part awhile—and lo !  
Sir Conrad into foreign parts  
As errant-knight must go !

Some name to which he might be true  
He sought for near and far,  
But with the maidens whom he knew  
He was not popular.

Men jeered the knight who ne'er had been  
 With love of maiden blessed,  
 Till, mad with disappointment keen,  
 His aunt he thus addressed :

"No longer shall such chaff inane  
 Against my head be hurled ;  
 If you'll allow me, I'll maintain  
*Your* charms against the world !

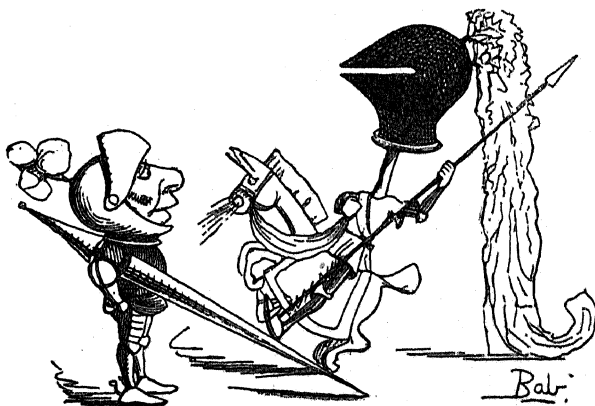
"All knights shall at thine honoured name  
 In fealty bend the knee—  
 From every errant I will claim  
 His homage, aunt, for thee ! "

A tear stood in her widow'd eye,  
 And thus outspoke the dame—  
 "Oh, don't you think you'd better try  
 Some younger lady's name ?

"For folks would chuckle if they should  
 Discover I'm your aunt."  
 "I would," said Conrad, "if I could,  
 But then, you see, I can't."

"Then go, my boy, with dauntless eye,  
 My peerlessness maintain ;  
 Make this your dreaded battle-cry,  
 'King Harry and Aunt Jane !' "

\* \* \* \* \*



“ Ho ! stand, Sir Knight, if thou be brave,  
And try thy might with mine,  
Unless you wish this trusty glaive  
To cleave thee to the chine ! ”

So spake Sir Conrad as he thrust  
His lance in gallant mode—  
Towards a knight in suit of rust,  
Who passed him on the road.

The knight at words so boldly shaped,  
Stopped short and turned him round,  
Then humbly touched his brow, and scraped  
His foot upon the ground.

“ Ha ! ” quoth Sir Conrad, “ malpert !  
Dost think with threats to brave  
Sir Conrad’s wrath, thou thing of dirt—  
Thou braggadocio knave ?

“ Sir Conrad thus you may not daunt,  
Or make him hold his rein—  
Come—swear you never knew an aunt  
So fair as my Aunt Jane ! ”

“ Fair sir,” the Rusty One replied,  
“ Indeed, I do not think  
I ever knew but one—who died,  
And all along of drink.”

“ Then own, thou braggart, by thy star,”  
Sir Talbotype replied,  
“ That my Aunt Jane is fairer far  
Than she who lately died ! ”

The knight rejoined, “ Oh, do not cut—  
Forbear, my Lord, to strike !  
I have not seen the lady, but  
I think it’s very like.

“ To that belief—I own it free—  
I solemnly incline—  
No aunt of yours could ever be  
So great a beast as mine.

"She figured in police reports  
 Along of 'heavy wet,'  
 And was be-knownn at all the courts  
 As 'Coxybogy Bet!'"

"Then sign this paper," Conrad said,  
 "Or there I'll stretch thee stark!"  
 The Rusty One inclined his head  
 And made his knightly mark.

"Beshrew me! here's a dullard wight,  
 Grammercy, halidame!  
 Thou call'st thyself an errant knight,  
 And canst not sign thy name!"

"A knight?" exclaimed the Rusty One;  
 "Lor bless your honour, no!  
 I'm only hired to set of sun  
 To join the Lord Mayor's Show!"

\* \* \* \* \*

Sir Conrad hied him home again  
 As quickly as he could,  
 Right-welcomed by his kind Aunt Jane  
 And all the neighbourhood.



He told them how in foreign land  
 He fought that rusty buck;  
 And though the maidens scorn his hand,  
 They do not doubt his pluck.

## THE BANDOLINE PLAYER.

A troubadour, young, brave, and  
tall,

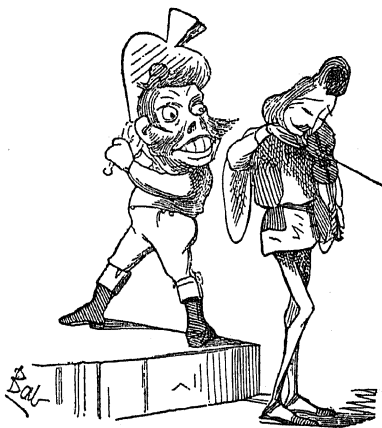
One morning might be seen,  
A singing under Colter's Hall  
Upon the village green.

He went through all the usual  
forms,

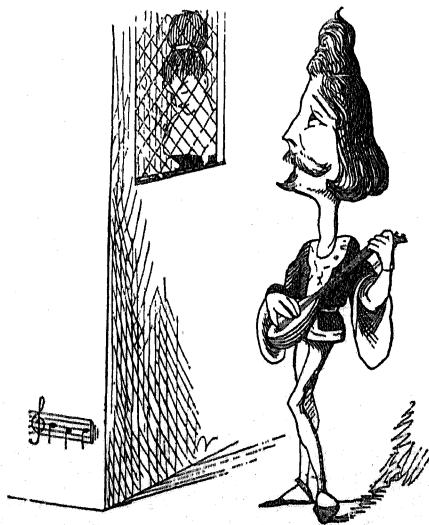
And rolled his eyes of blue,  
As dying ducks in thunderstorms  
Are often said to do.

For Colter had a daughter, she  
Was barely twenty-two.

Why sang that minstrel party?  
He  
Adored her—so would you.



He played upon a what's-its-name—  
You know the thing I mean—  
The *Pall Mall* critics call the same  
A "dainty bandoline."



And Colter's daughter, wrapt  
in joy  
(A sweet romantic maid),  
She smiled upon that guile-  
less boy  
As gracefully he played.

"Oh, person in the crimson  
legs,"  
She modestly exclaimed,  
"A bashful maiden coyly  
begs  
You'll tell her how you're  
named."

"For, oh, you feed a tender  
flame  
In playing on the green,  
And, oh, she loves what  
critics name  
The dainty bandoline!"

That troubadour he tore his hair  
 And sent a sigh above,  
 To think his bandoline should share  
 That maiden's wealth of love.

He hied him to his village shed,  
 Wept village tears in quarts,  
 Then laid him on his village bed,  
 And thought these village thoughts :

" I must be worshipped all in all,  
 For what I've always been—  
 And not for what the critics call  
 My dainty bandoline.

" To which of us her loving may  
 Be due, I'll thus detect—  
 Upon the fiddle I can play  
 With singular effect.

" To-morrow, with its graceful aid,  
 Her moments I'll beguile,  
 That maiden I will serenade  
 In Joachim's finest style."

And so he did, that gallant boy,  
 But never came the maid ;  
 He, hoping she was only coy,  
 Still sang to her and played.

Beethoven, Gluck, Piccini, Spohr,  
 He gave her for a while,  
 And other masters even more  
 " Dot-touch-and-go " in style.

For hours that patient boy he played  
 At Father Colter's farm—  
 Behind his noble shoulder-blade,  
 And underneath his arm :

Below his leg—behind his back  
 He played till he was red—  
 Between his knees, with dainty knack,  
 And then above his head.

With musico-gymnastic tricks  
 He warbled forth her name :  
 From half-past nine till half-past six,  
 But, ah ! no maiden came.

(For Mary had been sent away  
 To Weston-super-Mare—  
 A fact of which that minstrel gay  
 Was wholly unaware.)

But Father Colter rose at nine,  
 His wrath it also rised,  
 For fiddle, voice, and bandoline  
 He equally despised.

" I have," said he, " some bellows *here*—  
 A fine young noddle *there*—  
 It would but be politeness mere  
 To introduce the pair ! "

No sooner was it said than done,  
 And as above I've shown,  
 Upon the sconce he fetched him one—  
 One for himself alone !

" Ah, Mary," said the simple lad,  
 " I know thy gentle touch,  
 Upon my word, this is too bad,  
 I feel it very much.

" That you don't care for me at all  
 Is easy to be seen—  
 You love what *Pall Mall* critics call  
 My dainty bandoline ! "

(But Mary had been sent away  
 To Weston-super-Mare—  
 A fact of which that minstrel gay  
 Was wholly unaware.)





## THE STORY OF GENTLE ARCHIBALD

WHO WANTED TO BE A CLOWN



My children, once I knew a boy  
 (His name was Archibald Molloy),  
 Whose kind papa, one Christmas-time,  
 Took him to see a pantomime.  
 He was a mild, delightful boy,  
 Who hated jokes that caused annoy;  
 And none who knew him could complain  
 That Archy ever gave them pain.  
 But don't suppose he was a sad,  
 Or serious, solemn kind of lad;  
 Indeed, he was a cheerful son,  
 Renowned for mild, respectful fun.

But, oh, it was a rueful day  
 When he was taken to the play;  
 The Christmas pantomime that night  
 Destroyed his gentle nature quite;  
 And as they walked along the road

That led to his papa's abode,  
As on they trudged through muck and mire,  
He said, "Papa, if you desire  
My fondest hopes and joys to crown,  
Allow me to become a clown!"  
I will not here attempt to show  
The bitter agony and woe,  
The sorrow and depression dire  
Of Archy's old and feeble sire.  
"Oh, Archibald," said he, "my boy,  
My darling Archibald Molloy!  
Attention for one moment lend—  
You cannot seriously intend  
To spend a roving life in town,  
As vulgar, base, dishonest clown,  
And leave your father in the lurch,  
Who always meant you for the Church,  
And nightly dreams he sees his boy  
The Reverend Archibald Molloy?"  
That night as Archy lay awake,  
Thinking of all he'd break and take,  
If he but had his heart's desire,  
The room seemed filled with crimson fire;  
The wall expanded by degrees,  
Disclosing shells and golden trees,  
Revolving round, and round, and round;  
Red coral strewn upon the ground;  
And on the trees, in tasty green,  
The loveliest fairies ever seen;  
But one more fair than all the rest  
Came from a lovely golden nest,  
And said to the astonished boy,  
"Oh, Master Archibald Molloy,  
I know the object of your heart—  
To-morrow morning you shall start  
Upon your rambles through the town  
As merry, mischief-making clown!"

\* \* \* \* \*

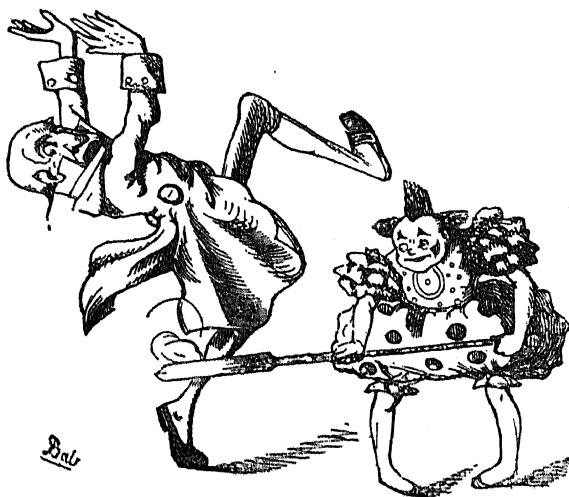
Next day, when Nurse Amelia called,  
To wash and dress her Archibald,  
She opened both her aged eyes,  
With unmistakable surprise,  
To find that Archy, in the night,  
Had turned all red, and blue, and white,  
Of healthy colour not a trace—  
Red patches on his little face,

Black horsehair wig, round rolling eyes,  
 Short trousers of prodigious size,  
 White legs and arms, with spots of blue,  
 And spots upon his body too!  
 Said she, "Why, what is this, my boy?  
 My gentle Archibald Molloy!  
 Your good papa I'll go and tell,  
 You must be dreadfully unwell,  
 Although I know of no disease  
 With any symptoms such as these."



The good old lady turned to go  
 And fetch his good papa, when lo!  
 With irresistible attack  
 He jumped upon her aged back,  
 Pulled off the poor old lady's front,  
 And thrashed her, while she tried to grunt,  
 "Oh, Archibald, what have you done?  
 Is this your mild, respectful fun,  
 You bad, ungentlemanly boy?  
 Fie on you, Archibald Molloy!"  
 Some dreadful power unseen, but near,  
 Still urged him on his wild career,  
 And made him burn, and steal, and kill,  
 Against his gentlemanly will.  
 The change had really turned his brain;  
 He boiled his little sister Jane;

He painted blue his aged mother ;  
 Sat down upon his little brother ;  
 Tripped up his cousins with his hoop ;  
 Put pussy in his father's soup ;



Placed beetles in his uncle's shoe ;  
 Cut a policeman right in two ;  
 Spread devastation round,—and, ah,  
 He red-hot poked his papa !

Be sure, this highly reckless course  
 Brought Archibald sincere remorse.  
 He liked a joke, and loved a laugh,  
 But was too well-behaved by half—  
 With too much justice and good sense—  
 To laugh at other folks' expense.  
 The gentle boy could never sleep,  
 But used to lie awake and weep,  
 To think of all the ill he'd done.  
 "Is this," said he, "respectful fun ?  
 Oh, fairy, fairy, I would fain  
 That you should change me back again ;  
 Some dreadful power I can't resist  
 Directs my once respectful fist ;  
 Change, and I'll never once complain,  
 Or wish to be a clown again ! "

He spoke, and lo! the wretched boy  
 Once more was Archibald Molloy;  
 He gave a wild, delighted scream,  
 And woke—for, lo, it was a dream!

### THE THREE BOHEMIAN ONES



A worthy man in every way  
 Was Mister Jasper Porklebay;  
 He was a merchant of renown  
 (The firm was Porklebay and Brown).

Three sons he had, and only three,  
 But they were bad as bad could be;  
 They spurned their father's righteous ways,  
 And went to races, balls, and plays.

On Sundays they would laugh and joke,  
 I've heard them bet, I've known them smoke.  
 At whist they'd sometimes take a hand;  
 These vices Jasper couldn't stand.

At length the eldest son, called Dan,  
 Became a stock tragedian,  
 And earned his bread by ranting through  
 Shakespearean parts, as others do.

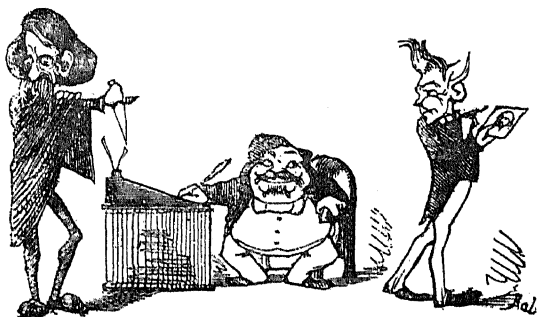
The second (Donald) would insist  
 On starting as a journalist,  
 And wrote amusing tales and scenes  
 In all the monthly magazines.

The youngest (Singleton his name)  
 A comic artist he became,  
 And made an income fairly good  
 By drawing funny heads on wood.

And as they trod these fearful ways  
 (These three misguided Porklebays)  
 They drew not on their father's hoard—  
 For Jasper threw them overboard.

Yes—Jasper, grieving at their fall,  
 Renounced them one, renounced them all.  
 And lived alone, so good and wise,  
 At Zion Villa, Clapham Rise.

By dint of work and skilful plan  
 Old Jasper grew a wealthy man ;  
 And people said, in slangy form,  
 That Jasper P. would "cut up warm."



He had no relative at all  
 On whom his property could fall,  
 Except, of course, his wicked sons,  
 Those three depraved Bohemian ones.



So he determined he would fain  
 Bequeath his wealth (despite mortmain),  
 Freeholds, debenture, stock and all,  
 To some deserving hospital.

When his intent was known abroad,  
 Excitement reigned in every ward,  
 And with the well-experienced throng  
 Of operators all went wrong.

St. George's, Charing Cross, and Guy's,  
And little Westminster likewise,  
Bartholomew's and Middlesex,  
Combined old Jasper to perplex.

House surgeons, spite of patients' hints,  
Bound headaches up in fracture splints;  
In measles, strapped the spots that come,  
With strips of plain diachylum.

Rare leeches, skilled at fever beds,  
For toothache shaved their patients' heads;  
And always cut their fingers off  
If they complained of whooping cough.

Their zeal grew greater day by day,  
And each did all that in him lay  
To prove his own pet hospital  
The most deserving of them all.

Though Jasper P. could not but feel  
Delighted at this show of zeal,  
When each in zeal exceeds the rest,  
One can't determine which is best.

*Interea*, his reckless boys  
Indulged in low Bohemian joys;  
They sometimes smoked till all was blue,  
And danced at evening parties too.

The hospitals, conflicting sore,  
Perplexed poor Jasper more and more.  
But, ah! ere Jasper could decide,  
Poor charitable man, he died.



And Donald, Singleton, and Dan  
Now roll in wealth, despite his plan:  
So Donald, Dan, and Singleton,  
By dint of accident have won.

Vice triumphs here; but, if you please,  
It's by exceptions such as these  
(From probability removed)  
That every standing rule is proved.

By strange exceptions Virtue deigns  
To prove how paramount she reigns;  
A standing rule I do not know,  
That's been more oft established so.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

King George's Middy (Gilbert W.), with illustrations by W.G.S.		1869
The Magic Mirror (Gilbert W.), with illustrations by W.G.S.		1866
London Characters (H. Mayhew), with illustrations by W.G.S. and others		1874
An Algerian Monkey versus British Apes ("The Spectre"), with illustrations by W.G.S.		1864
The Bab Ballads. Much Sound and Little Sense. With illustrations by the author	John Camden Hotten	1869
The Bab Ballads. Another edition	Routledge	1870
The Bab Ballads. More Bab Ballads	"	1873
Fifty Bab Ballads	" 1876 and	1877
Fifty Bab Ballads (a re-issue)	"	1878
The Bab Ballads. With 225 illustrations by the author	"	1882
Fifty Bab Ballads	"	1887
Fifty Bab Ballads (a re-issue)	"	1889
The Bab Ballads, with which are included Songs of a Savoyard. With 350 illustrations by the author	"	1898
Sixth edition	Macmillan & Co.	1904
An Old Score. An original comedy drama in three acts	Lacey's Acting Edition of Plays	1870
Another edition	"	1876
The Princess. A whimsical allegory. Being a respectable perversion of Mr. Tennyson's poem	"	1870
The Palace of Truth. A fairy comedy in three acts	"	1871
The Gentleman in Black. An original musical legend in two acts	"	1871
Randall's Thumb. An original comedy in three acts	"	1872
Creatures of Impulse. A musical fairy- tale in one act	"	1872
On Guard. An entirely original comedy in three acts	"	1874



## 262 W. S. GILBERT: HIS LIFE AND LETTERS

Pygmalion and Galatea. An entirely original mythological comedy in three acts	Edition of Plays	1875
The Wicked World. An entirely original fairy comedy in three acts and one scene (printed for private circulation only)	„	1875
Another edition	„	1887
Sweethearts. An original dramatic comedy in two acts	„	1878
The Wedding March (Le Chapeau de Paille d'Italie, by E. M. Labiche). An eccentricity in three acts	„	1879
Tom Cobb; or, Fortune's Toy. An entirely original farcical comedy in three acts	„	1880
Broken Hearts. An entirely original fairy play in three acts	„	1881
Dan'l Druce, Blacksmith. A new and original drama in three acts. An incident in the last act suggested by George Eliot's novel, "Silas Marner"	„	1881
Engaged. An entirely original farcical comedy in three acts	„	1881
On Bail. A farcical comedy in three acts. Adapted from Le Reveillon	„	1881
Charity. An entirely original play in four acts	„	1885
Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. A tragic episode in three tableaux, founded on an old Danish legend	„	1893
Comedy and Tragedy. An original drama in one act	„	1895
Robert the Devil; or, The Nun, the Dun, and the Son of a Gun. An operatic extravaganza	Phillips	1868
La Vivandière; or, True to the Corps. An original Operetta extravaganza	Montague	1868
The Sorcerer. An entirely original modern comic opera in two acts	Metzler	1877
The Sorcerer. . . . Also Trial by Jury, etc.	Chappell	1878
Trial by Jury. A dramatic cantata	„	1888
H.M.S. Pinafore; or, The Lass that Loved a Sailor. An entirely original nautical comic opera	Metzler	1878
Another edition. Calcutta, Saturday Club		1879
Another edition (with full-length portrait of the characters in costume)	G. W. Carleton, New York	1879

Another edition	Metzler	1878
Another edition	Chappell	1878
Selections of Songs from H.M.S. Pinafore. Printing Press, 2nd Batt. 10th Regt., Malta		1880
The Pirates of Penzance; or, The Slave of Duty. An entirely original comic opera in two acts	„	1880
Patience; or, Bunthorne's Bride. An en- tirely new and æsthetic opera in two acts	„	1881
Princess Ida; or, Castle Adamant. A respectable perversion of Tennyson's "Princess," in three acts	„	1884
The Brigands. An opéra bouffe in three acts, by Offenbach. The English ver- sion by W. S. Gilbert	Boosey	1884
Iolanthe; or, the Peer and the Peri. An entirely original fairy opera in two acts	Chappell	1885
The Mikado; or, The Town of Titipu. An entirely new and original Japanese opera in two acts	„	1885
Three Little Maids from School. A song from The Mikado, illustrated in colours	Castell Bros.	1892
Mikadoen eller en dag i Titipu—Pac Dansk sed E. A. Nyegaard, English and Danish—Christiania		1887
Der Mikado, oder die Stadt Titipu. Japan- ische Komische Oper in 2 Akten. Text von W. S. Gilbert	Nebe, Chicago	1887
Ruddigore; or, The Witch's Curse. An entirely original supernatural opera in two acts	Chappell	1887
Another edition	„	1891
The Yeomen of the Guard; or, The Merry- man and his Maid	„	1888
The Yeomen of the Guard (illustra- tions of scenes from the opera, with quotations from the libretto by W. S. Gilbert)	„	1889
The Gilbert and Sullivan Birthday Book The Gondoliers; or, The King of Barataria. An entirely original comic opera in two acts	Pickering & Chatto	1888
Songs of a Savoyard (illustrated)	Chappell	1889
	Routledge	1890
The Mountebanks. An entirely original comic opera	Chappell	1892

## 264 W. S. GILBERT: HIS LIFE AND LETTERS

Utopia Limited ; or, The Flowers of Progress	Chappell	1893
His Excellency. An entirely original comic opera in two acts	„	1894
The Grand Duke ; or, The Statutory Duel. A comic opera in two acts	„	1896
No Cards. A musical piece in one act (part of the German Reed repertory of musical pieces)	Williams	1902
Original Plays. Four series	Chatto & Windus	1876 & 1911
Rutland Barrington, by Himself, with a preface by Sir W. S. Gilbert		1908
W. S. Gilbert, by Edith A. Browne	Lane	1907
Savoy Operas—Patience, Princess Ida, Pirates of Penzance, Yeomen of the Guard. With illustrations in colour by W. Russell	Bell	1909
Comic Operas, with coloured illustrations As above—Iolanthe, The Mikado, Ruddigore, and The Gondoliers. With illustrations in colour by W.R.F.	„	1911
The Pinafore Picture Book. The story of H.M.S. Pinafore told by Sir W. S. Gilbert, and illustrated by Alice B. Woodward	„	1910
A Sensation Novel in three volumes (an operetta), written by W. S. Gilbert, composed by Florian Pascal	„	1908
Judge Parry's article in Dictionary of National Biography	Williams	1912
William Schwenck Gilbert: an Autobiography	The Theatre (April)	1883
Life of Sir Arthur Sullivan, by Arthur Lawrence		1889
English Dramatists of To-day, by William Archer		
Real Conversations, by William Archer		
The Savoy Opera and the Savoyards, by Percy Fitzgerald		
Gaiety Chronicles, by John Hollingshead		1898
W.S.G. in Scribner's Monthly, xviii, 754		1879
Smalley's London Letters (2 vols.)		1890
Anglo-American Memories		1911
The English Aristophanes	Fortnightly Review	1912
Dictionary of the Drama, by W. Davenport Adams		

## THE GILBERT AND SULLIVAN OPERAS

OPERA.	Date of First Production.	Theatre.	No. of Perfs.
Trial by Jury . . . . .	March 25, 1875	<i>Royalty Theatre</i>	—
The Sorcerer . . . . .	Nov. 17, 1877	<i>Opéra-Comique</i>	175
H.M.S. Pinafore . . . . .	May 25, 1878	„	700
The Pirates of Penzance. .	April 3, 1880	„	363
Patience . . . . .	April 23, 1881	„	578
Iolanthe . . . . .	Nov. 25, 1882	<i>Savoy Theatre</i>	398
Princess Ida . . . . .	Jan. 5, 1884	„	246
The Mikado . . . . .	March 14, 1885	„	672
Ruddigore . . . . .	Jan. 22, 1887	„	288
The Yeomen of the Guard .	Oct. 3, 1888	„	423
The Gondoliers . . . . .	Dec. 7, 1889	„	554
Utopia Limited . . . . .	Oct. 7, 1893	„	245
The Grand Duke . . . . .	March 7, 1896	„	123

OPERA.	Date of Revivals.	Theatre.	No of Perfs.
The Sorcerer & Trial by Jury .	Oct. 11, 1884	<i>Savoy Theatre</i>	150
The Sorcerer & Trial by Jury .	Sept. 22, 1898	„	102
H.M.S. Pinafore . . . . .	Nov. 12, 1887	„	120
H.M.S. Pinafore . . . . .	June 6, 1899	„	174
H.M.S. Pinafore . . . . .	July 14, 1908	„	61
The Pirates of Penzance .	March 17, 1888	„	80
The Pirates of Penzance .	June 30, 1900	„	127
The Pirates of Penzance .	Dec. 1, 1908	„	43
The Mikado . . . . .	June 7, 1888	„	116
The Mikado . . . . .	Nov. 6, 1895	„	127
The Mikado . . . . .	July 11, 1896	„	226
The Mikado . . . . .	April 28, 1908	„	142
The Yeomen of the Guard .	May 5, 1897	„	186
The Yeomen of the Guard .	Dec. 8, 1906	„	90
The Yeomen of the Guard .	March 1, 1909	„	28
The Gondoliers . . . . .	March 22, 1898	„	62
The Gondoliers . . . . .	July 18, 1898	„	63

# 266 W. S. GILBERT: HIS LIFE AND LETTERS

OPERA.	Date of Revivals.	Theatre	No of Perfs.
The Gondoliers . . . .	Jan. 22, 1907	<i>Savoy Theatre</i>	76
The Gondoliers . . . .	Jan. 18, 1909	„	22
Patience . . . . .	Nov. 7, 1900	„	150
Patience . . . . .	April 4, 1907	„	51
Iolanthe . . . . .	Dec. 7, 1901	„	113
Iolanthe . . . . .	June 11, 1907	„	42
Iolanthe . . . . .	Oct. 19, 1908	„	38

Repertory Season . . . Sept. 29, 1919 *Prince's Theatre*  
to Jan. 31, 1920

All the above-named operas were played excepting *Ruddigore*, *Utopia Limited*, and *The Grand Duke*.

Repertory Season . . . Oct. 3, 1921 *Prince's Theatre*  
to April 8, 1922

All the above-named operas were played excepting *Utopia Limited* and *The Grand Duke*.

## INDEX

- Actors, Authors and Audiences, 37  
 Addison, Carlotta, 43  
 Anderson, Mary, 51, 56  
 — — Letters to, 154  
 — Percy, 162  
 Archer, William, 56, 61, 105
- Bab Ballads*, 24-35  
 — — Origin of, 4  
 Bancroft, Mrs., 54, 154  
 — — Letter to, 191  
 Barrington, Rutland, 56, 70, 73,  
     78, 83, 87, 93, 102, 111, 124,  
     127, 140  
 Bateman, Miss, Criticism of, 15  
 — Jessie, 142  
 Bentham, George, 70  
 Beresford, Lord Charles, Letter  
     from, 75  
 Bond, Jessie, 73, 78, 87, 93, 102,  
     106, 111, 140  
 — — Letters to, 158  
 Bourchier, Arthur, 143  
 — Mrs., Letters to, 163  
 Braham, Leonora, 87, 93, 102  
 Brandram, Miss, 93, 102, 106, 111,  
     124, 127  
*Brantingham Hall*, 56, 57  
 Brief, Gilbert's Maiden, 6  
*Broken Hearts*, 54  
 Brough, Lionel, 47, 137  
 Buckstone, Mr., 50
- Carte, Mrs. D'Oyly, Letters to,  
     135, 144, 145, 146, 204  
 Chappell, Frank, 69
- Charity*, 53  
 Charles, Mr. F., 43  
 Codes, Gilbert's Affection for, 133  
 Coke, Lady Katharine, Illustrated  
     Letter to, 181  
 Collard, John, 69  
*Comedy and Tragedy*, 56, 58  
*Comic Physiognomist, The*, 22  
 Crutchley, Lady, 181  
 — — Letter to, 183
- Dan'l Druce*, 55  
*Darned Mounseer, The*, 48  
 Denny, W. H., 106, 111, 124  
 Derby Poem, 27  
 D'Oyly Carte, 68  
*Dulcamara*, 42
- Edwardes, George, 83  
*Elixir of Love, An*, 37  
*Engaged*, 55  
 Everard, Miss, 70, 73, 93
- Fairy's Dilemma, The*, 142  
*Fallen Fairies*, 143  
 Farren, Miss E., 62  
*Faust*, Criticism of Burlesque of,  
     17  
*Five Alls, The*, 40  
*Foggerty's Fairy*, 36, 56  
 Forbes, Norman, 56  
 Fortescue, Miss, 83, 87, 157  
*Fun*, Writers for, 9
- Gilbert, William (Senior), 3, 4  
 — W. S., Death of, 222  
 Gilbert's First Literary Effort, 7

- Gondoliers, The*, 111  
*Grand Duke, The*, 127  
*Great Expectations*, 53  
*Gretchen*, 56  
 Grim's Dyke, Description of, 207  
 Grossmith, George, 70, 73, 78, 83,  
     87, 93, 102, 106, 140  
 Gwynne, Fanny, 50  
 — Julia, 78, 83, 87  
  
*Happy Land, The*, 53  
*His Excellency*, 139  
 Hodson, Henrietta, 47  
 Hollingshead, John, 63  
 Hood, Marion, 78  
  
*Iolanthe*, 67, 87  
  
 Jay, Isabel, 161  
  
 Kendal, Mrs., 50, 51, 53, 54, 153  
 — Mr., 53, 54  
*King George's Middy*, 3  
 Knighthood, Gilbert's, 196  
  
*La Vivandière*, 47  
 Le Hay, John, 124, 140  
 Lenoir, Miss, Letters to, 132  
 Lewis, Mabel Terry, Letters to,  
     189  
*Lie of a Lifetime, The ; or, The*  
     *Modern Augustus*, 12  
 Limericks, 177, 178  
 Loseby, Constance, 63  
*Lost Babs, The* (Appendix), 241  
 Lytton, Marie, 53  
  
 McDonnell, Ellen, 43  
 McIntosh, Nancy, 124, 140, 143,  
     211  
*Magic Mirror, The*, 3  
 Manners, Charles, 87  
 Marshall, Captain, Letter to, 164  
 Mathews, Mr. and Mrs. Charles, 17  
 Matthews, Frank, 43  
 Maude, Cyril, 187  
 — Margery, 188  
  
*Memoirs of a Cynic*, 3  
 Michele, Miss Beatrice de, Letters  
     to, 184  
*Mikado, The*, 96  
 Monkhouse, Harry, 137  
 Moore, Decima, 111, 161  
 — Eva, 137  
*Mountebanks, The*, 137  
 Murray, Gaston, 43  
 — Mrs. Gaston, 56  
*Musings in a Music-hall*, 19  
  
 Neilson, Julia, 56  
 Norreys, Rose, 56  
  
*On Guard*, 53  
  
*Palace of Truth, The*, 50, 52  
*Pantomimic Unities, On*, 19  
 Passmore, Walter, 124, 127  
*Patience*, 72, 82  
 Penley, W. S., 66  
*Pinafore, H.M.S.*, 48, 67, 73  
*Pirates of Penzance, The*, 4, 77  
 Playfair, Arthur, 137, 140  
 Porteous, Gilbert, 137  
 Pounds, Courtice, 106, 111  
*Princess Ida*, 92  
*Princess, The*, 50, 92  
*Pygmalion and Galatea*, 51, 52  
  
*Randall's Thumb*, 53  
 Reinhardt, Miss M., 50  
*Robinson Crusoe ; or, The Injun*  
     *Bride and the Injured Wife*, 10  
*Rosencrantz and Guildenstern*, 56,  
     211  
*Ruddigore*, 67, 102  
*Ruy Blas*, 44  
  
 Scott, Clement and Gilbert, 214  
 — Miss Gordon, Letter to, 191  
*Sorcerer, The*, 69, 70  
 Soutar, Robert, 63  
 Sullivan, 62  
*Sweethearts*, 54

- Talbot, Mrs., Letters to, 168, 195  
Temple, Richard, 70, 73, 78, 87,  
93, 102, 106  
Terriss, Ellaline, 140  
Terry, Kate, 189  
— Marion, 55  
— — Letter to, 190  
*Thespis; or, The Gods Grown Old*,  
62  
*Tom Cobb*, 54  
Toole, J. L., 47, 63  
*Trial by Jury*, 65  
Ulmar, Geraldine, 106, 137  
*Unappreciated Shakespeare*, 39  
*Utopia Limited*, 124  
Valentine, Sydney, 142  
Vanbrugh, Violet, 142  
Vincent, Ruth, 127  
Walbrook, H. M., 61  
Waller, Louis, 56  
*Wedding March, The*, 53  
Wilton, Marie, Criticism of, 17  
*Yeomen of the Guard, The*, 106



*Printed in Great Britain by  
Butler & Tanner Ltd.,  
Frome and London*







UNIVERSAL  
LIBRARY



114 581

UNIVERSAL  
LIBRARY